

Southern New Hampshire University

Nathaniel and Armenia White's City:
Concord, New Hampshire's History Retold

A Capstone Project Submitted to the College of Online and Continuing Education in Partial
Fulfillment of the Master of Arts in History

By

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Abstract

Nathaniel and Armenia White were nineteenth-century citizens of Concord, New Hampshire, whose business endeavors and philanthropic activities had a substantial social impact on the city that is still visible today. This research uses a social history approach to show that Nathaniel White was significantly responsible for the retention of the state capital at Concord, as well as the funding and organization of numerous public works projects, real estate developments, and charitable endeavors throughout the city. Armenia White's involvement with abolition and the women's suffrage movement is well-documented, and connects her activism to the physical places within the city that are known for these social movements. The final product of this research is a proposed exhibit trail that highlights the Whites and their legacy through the city's built environment and social consciousness, and proposes a retelling of Concord's history with a focus on the nineteenth-century developments that are visibly evident in the city today.

Dedication

To my daughter Constance, who is the same age now as Anna Frances White was in 1857, when an escaped slave seeking freedom on the Underground Railroad took refuge in the haymow on her family's farm and carved her a dollhouse.

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Introduction

It must not be forgotten that the outward and material appearance of a city is the natural outcome and expression of the life and ideas under which it has developed. The value of its traditions is consequently measurable by the value of the part it has taken in the history of human development.

H. V. Lanchester, *Tradition and City Development*, January, 1915¹

Every city is built by hands and hearts that are human, and every city is visibly shaped by the life and ideas of those who helped develop it. Concord, New Hampshire, was incorporated in 1725 by the Massachusetts Bay Colony through a land grant as the Penacook Plantation, and it was later settled as the village of Rumford in 1733. Reincorporated in 1765 as the town of Concord in New Hampshire, in 1808 it became the State Capital and home to the legislature.² Its central location and political influence quickly made it a hub for industry, transportation, and cultural life. Throughout the nineteenth century, many notable men and women contributed their talents and efforts to developing the city that Concord would rapidly become. Among them, Nathaniel and Armenia White stood out as extraordinarily generous and active in their contributions to the community. Indeed, Nathaniel and Armenia White's business endeavors and philanthropic activities had a substantial social impact on the city of Concord that is still visible today.

The nineteenth century was a century of growing pains for the United States. It was as though the young republic went through an adolescent phase, flexing its muscles and testing its boundaries, as it tried to figure what it wanted to be when it grew up. After the Civil War, the

¹ H. V. Lanchester, "Tradition and City Development," *The Town Planning Review* 5, no. 4 (January 1915): 260, accessed August 29, 2018, <http://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://www.jstor.org/stable/40100630>.

² James O. Lyford, *History of Concord, New Hampshire From the Original Grant in Seventeen Hundred and Twenty-Five to the Opening of the Twentieth Century* (Concord, NH: Rumford Press, 1903), accessed May 22, 2018, <http://concordnh.gov/1047/Lyford-History-of-Concord>.

nation grappled with many weighty issues, such as Reconstruction, abolition, suffrage, population growth, immigration, industrialization, and rapid modernization. Nestled in Northern New England, New Hampshire was not immune to the larger historical trends affecting the nation. With industrialization came the construction of large textile mills on the Merrimack River in Manchester, and with turnpikes and railroads came express companies that connected the state's citizens to the bustling centers of Boston and New York. With the shots fired at Fort Sumter, New Hampshire sent 32,000 of its young men off to war – a number, it is said, that was proportionately higher than any other Union state.³ In every way, New Hampshire actively participated in the history-making events and social movements that rocked the nation during this time.

City development in Concord during the nineteenth century was, in a sense, a microcosm of the nation's development, mirroring the larger trends on its own, smaller scale. The city and its citizens grappled with the same issues as their brothers and sisters in other cities and states. How should the city change and evolve to keep pace with industrial modernization? How should it support its growing population? What should it do with its minority groups, like women and former slaves, who are starting to demand their own voice? The answers to these questions would determine the direction of all future city development.

Within communities, men and women arose who were agents of change, leaders of social movements, and forerunners of economic development. Nathaniel and Armenia White were two such leaders in Concord. They lived in the city from 1848 until their deaths in 1880 and 1916, respectively. With the wealth from Nathaniel's successful express company and other business

³ Henry Harrison Metcalf, *New Hampshire in History: or, the contribution of the Granite State to the development of the nation* (Concord, NH: W. B. Ranney Company, 1922), 29.

ventures, the Whites supported numerous social causes, such as abolition and women's suffrage, and funded many public works and development projects. The historical record is rich with developments in business, politics, culture, religion, economic development, and charity, and the Whites participated in all of these conversations. Scattered throughout the city of Concord are buildings and spaces that exist in a meaningful way today because of the influence and generosity of the Whites, including the State House, the Eagle Hotel, and White Park, the plot of land donated to the city in Nathaniel White's memory in 1884.

The product of this research is a proposed public history project called the Nathaniel and Armenia White Exhibit Trail, a temporary outdoor exhibit installation located along a half-mile stretch of walking trail at White Park. It includes eleven exhibit stations, each consisting of a 24x36" color poster in an acrylic frame, mounted to a free-standing wooden or metal base. Each station features a place in Concord that was influenced by the Whites, with photographs of the buildings and other important objects from the nineteenth century, and narrative text that provides historical context for the images and how the building or space is used today. A QR code located on each exhibit panel directs viewers to an online exhibit designed specifically to complement the information on that exhibit panel, provide additional primary source images, and add more historical context to the location presented.⁴ The Nathaniel and Armenia White Exhibit Trail is designed to be a collaborative effort with a public history institution such as the New Hampshire Historical Society.

Chapter 1 provides a broad historiography of the topic, including New Hampshire history and historiographies for relevant aspects of nineteenth-century life, such as business,

⁴ The virtual exhibit can be found online at https://elainafisher.omeka.net/exhibits/show/nathaniel_and_armenia_white/introduction.

transportation, politics, religion, and entertainment. This extensive literature review provides valuable historical context for the Whites and their locally-focused activities. Secondary works that feature the Whites and their enterprises are also highlighted in this section.

Chapter 2 delves into the methodology of the research and explains the use of the social history perspective. A detailed research plan is provided. The New Hampshire Historical Society's collections and the Concord Public Library's local history room, the primary source repositories that supported this research project, are described in detail.

Chapter 3 describes the specialized audience that the exhibit trail is designed to reach. Included in this section is a discussion of how White Park was selected as the location for the exhibit trail based on its proximity to the exhibit's target audience.

Chapter 4 outlines the project plan and historical narrative for the exhibit trail. It provides a brief description of the outline that connects the physical and virtual exhibits, and defends the organizational strategy used to create the exhibit structure. This section also includes biographical information about the Whites and a detailed historical discussion of their business, personal, and social lives. The buildings and spaces that are highlighted in the exhibit trail are discussed at length in this chapter.

Chapter 5 presents a proposed budget for bringing the exhibit trail to life. Staffing needs are considered, and equipment options and costs are presented in detail. Possible grants that may be used to fund the exhibit trail production are identified.

Chapter 6 wraps up the project discussion with an overview of ethical and legal considerations, including potential concerns over the narrative and interpretation of an artifact made by an escaped slave. The need for future research is also discussed.

Chapter 1: Historiography

Due to factors such as industrialization and increased immigration, many American cities in the nineteenth century experienced dramatic population growth and economic development. In response, many cities commissioned histories that celebrated their founding, development, and accomplishments. The city of Concord was no exception; not one, but three official city histories were written during this time, two of which are the foundational secondary literature for all historical research on the city today. From a historiographical point of view, the history of Concord is broadly covered from the original land grant in 1725 through 1900.

The earliest of these works is Dr. Nathaniel Bouton's *The History of Concord, From its First Grant in 1725 to the Organization of the City Government in 1853, With a History of the Ancient Penacooks*, published in 1856. Dr. Bouton began with the Native American history of the area prior to the arrival of white settlers, and concluded his history with the organization of the city government in the 1850s. The utility of this work lies in the provision of a detailed historical context for the city. Also, the final chapter gives a political and social chronology of the formation of the city government in 1853, when Nathaniel White had just begun his political tenure, although no mention of Nathaniel White is made in the text.¹

James O. Lyford's *History of Concord New Hampshire From the Original Grant in Seventeen Hundred and Twenty-Five to the Opening of the Twentieth Century*, was a two-volume work commissioned by the city to supplement Bouton's text. Completed in 1903, it covered all of Concord's history from the 1725 land grant through the end of the nineteenth century, with a

¹ Nathaniel Bouton, *The History of Concord, From its First Grant in 1725 - To the Organization of the City Government in 1853, With a History of the Ancient Penacooks* (Concord, NH: Benning W. Sanborn, 1856), 1, accessed June 3, 2018, <http://concordnh.gov/1046/Boutons-History-of-Concord>.

special focus on the developments in the city since it organized as a municipality in 1853. The Commission's stated purpose was "to give as complete, readable, and accurate a history of Concord as possible, exploiting no enterprise and no individual, but preserving in compact form all those facts and incidents."² References to the Whites, especially Nathaniel White, are found throughout the later portions of the book. This resource is valuable in not only setting historical context for the Whites but chronicling some of their more well-known business and social endeavors.

Breadth of coverage, though, does not immediately convey a depth of coverage, and aside from these official histories, the historiography appears fragmented. Rather than full-length historical treatises, the secondary literature consists primarily of titles like John B. Clarke's *Sketches of Successful New Hampshire Men*, published in 1882, which gives brief biographical histories of several leading figures in the state (Nathaniel White included). Grace Amsden's lengthy manuscript, "A Capital for New Hampshire," completed in 1950, should also be considered here – as a 400-page manuscript, it is thorough in its presentation, but it remains in an unpublished state.

Expanding the historiography to include the state of New Hampshire is more fruitful. One of the earlier comprehensive histories that includes the nineteenth century is Everett Stackpole's *History of New Hampshire*, published in 1916. This is a five-volume work that spans the state's history from its probable "discovery" in 1603 by a British fisherman to the late nineteenth century. Volumes three and four focus on the politics, development (including railroads and

² James O. Lyford, *History of Concord, New Hampshire From the Original Grant in Seventeen Hundred and Twenty-Five to the Opening of the Twentieth Century* (Concord, NH: Rumford Press, 1903), viii, accessed May 22, 2018, <http://concordnh.gov/1047/Lyford-History-of-Concord>.

manufacturing), and social, religious and cultural aspects of the time period. Little mention is made of Nathaniel White, although interestingly, his business partner Benjamin Cheney is granted a space in the biographical fifth volume. Stackpole's stated desire was "to make this history illustrative of truth, righteousness, patriotism and human brotherhood," an attitude characteristic of the history writers of his time.³

Henry Harrison Metcalf's *New Hampshire in History: or, the contribution of the Granite state to the development of the nation*, published in 1922, also serves to establish the state of New Hampshire in its historical context within the nation. It is a comparatively short volume that discusses not the history of the state itself, but the contribution that New Hampshire made to the development of the nation. The book, inspired by lectures that the author provided to several clubs and organizations in Concord, sought "to consider, briefly, New Hampshire's part in the upbuilding of our republic—its contribution to the life of the nation and the progress of the world."⁴ His work serves as a compilation of names of early influential New Hampshire citizens, both male and female, in areas of politics, religion, law, business, medicine, and culture. Nathaniel White, along with his business partner Benjamin Cheney, are briefly recognized as early influencers and founders of the express company movement.⁵ In all, Metcalf's clear argument was that New Hampshire's most valuable contributions to the nation are its people.

The leading treatise on New Hampshire history is J. Duane Squires' *Granite State of the United States*, published in 1956. Another five-volume work, this is a comprehensive history of

³ Everett Schermerhorn Stackpole, *History of New Hampshire* (American Historical Society, 1916), preface.

⁴ Henry Harrison Metcalf, *New Hampshire in History: or, the contribution of the Granite State to the development of the nation* (Concord, NH: W. B. Ranney Company, 1922), 9.

⁵ Metcalf, *New Hampshire in History*, 97.

the state from its origins as an English commonwealth in 1623 until the middle of the twentieth century. Squires thoughtfully presented an argument for the compilation of such a history by noting scientist Louis Agassiz, who said that “from a small amount of water a thoughtful student could infer the existence of the mighty ocean.”⁶ So too, by grasping the whole of New Hampshire’s history, one can better understand the nation of which New Hampshire is just a small part. Like other state and local historians, he began with a discussion of the land and its indigenous residents. Of value for this research, volume one discusses many social movements present in the early half of the nineteenth century, many of which were movements espoused by Nathaniel and Armenia White, including temperance, abolition and suffrage. Volume two describes the rise in urbanization and city development, which is particularly important in understanding the role Nathaniel White played in that aspect.

All of these state histories are helpful in establishing historical context for the Whites and their activities, but make little to no mention of them specifically. The primary argument for all city and state histories surrounds the reasons for development, expansion, and growth in the nineteenth century. Lyford argued that there was no one individual more responsible than another.⁷ Squires argued that, at the state level, it was the collective state of mind of New Hampshire’s citizens that propelled its development. This reveals a significant gap in the existing secondary literature. There is a lack of coverage of prominent nineteenth-century Concord citizens, including Nathaniel and Armenia White, and others such as Benjamin Kimball, Lewis Downing, J. Stephen Abbot, and Nathaniel Rolfe, to name just a few. These men and women,

⁶ James Duane Squires, *The Granite State of the United States, volume 1* (New York: American Historical Company, 1956), ix.

⁷ Lyford, *History of Concord*, viii.

their families, and their stories, are important to the city's original establishment, in physical terms as well as social and cultural, and their histories would contribute greatly to the overall historiography of the city.

While this research explores the lives of Nathaniel and Armenia White primarily through a social history perspective, it also touches on aspects of business, economics, gender, politics, religion and culture. One of the larger components of this research is Nathaniel White's business enterprises, namely the United States and Canada Express Company. Nathaniel White and Benjamin Cheney formed a partnership in 1842 under the original name Cheney and Company Express.⁸

Kirkland's *Men, Cities and Transportation: A Study in New England History 1820-1900*, published in 1948, is a major work on the transportation history of the region. This history of New England's transportation networks begins with the eve of the railroad era and concludes with the consolidation of the transportation systems at the turn of the century. Regarding his argument, he wrote, "I have simply sought to treat the New England transportation system as a human response to the changing needs and ambitions of that area."⁹ The utility of this book comes with its discussion of the function and consolidation of express companies in conjunction with the rise of the railroads across the region. However, only a passing mention is made of the United States and Canada Express Company, and no mention is made of Nathaniel White's involvement.

⁸ John N. Ingham, "Cheney, Benjamin Pierce," in *Biographical Dictionary of American Business Leaders, Vol. 1*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 152, accessed June 3, 2018, <https://books.google.com/books/?id=KRjPBj19i-4C>.

⁹ Edward C. Kirkland, *Men, Cities and Transportation: A Study in New England History 1820-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), vii.

Supplementary to this text is the Garvins' *On the Road North of Boston: New Hampshire Taverns and Turnpikes, 1700-1900*, published in 1988. The Garvins described in detail and with supporting images the stage routes and tavern buildings through the state from 1700 to 1900. The authors argue that the tavern, and later the hotel or inn, was the center of public life and served a larger function than just a place to stay.¹⁰ The book has rich descriptions of stage coach travel and popular stops and hotels in Concord, providing insight into the environment that supported Nathaniel White's first forays into business as a stage coach driver, and his later express business and hotel ownership in the city. While the Eagle Hotel is presented for its importance as a stage stop and local hub of political and commercial enterprise, no mention is made of Nathaniel White.

One final key text in the study of express companies is Alvin Fay Harlow's *Old Waybills: The Romance of the Express Companies*, published in 1934. Harlow was a prolific writer on transportation and its importance to the growth of the nation. While much of the book deals with stagecoach robberies and the romanticized notions of stage coaches and their drivers, it does devote considerable attention to the historical development of express companies, including Nathaniel White's United States and Canada Express Company, which Harlow argued was one of the earliest pioneers in the express business in New England.¹¹ While the company is only given a brief mention of several pages, they are credited for their role in creating and expanding the part that express companies played in national history.

¹⁰ Donna-Belle Garvin and James L. Garvin. *On the Road North of Boston: New Hampshire Taverns and Turnpikes, 1700-1900* (Concord, NH: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1988), vi.

¹¹ Alvin Fay Harlow, *Old Waybills: The Romance of the Express Companies* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc, 1934), 59.

The Whites were active in many social endeavors, but this project will focus primarily on their charity work and their activism in the abolitionist and women's suffrage movements. On the subject of abolition, there are two sources of interest, the first being Michelle Sherburne's *Slavery and the Underground Railroad in New Hampshire*. Sherburne argued that the writers of nineteenth-century histories scrubbed the Underground Railroad (and the state's part in slavery, as well) from their historical accounts.¹² She laid out the evidence for slavery as a long-standing institution in the state and discussed the work of notable abolitionists like Parker Pillsbury and William Lloyd Garrison. Her work is valuable in setting the framework for Underground Railroad activity in the state, and the historical record connects the Whites to the abolitionists she discussed.

The second supportive text is Larry Garra's *Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad*, published in 1996. Garra argued that although the Underground Railroad was a reality, much of the evidence for it is more of a myth or legend. Too much credit, he believed, is given to the abolitionists and not enough to the slaves themselves who are the true heroes of their own escape and freedom.¹³ The utility of *The Liberty Line* lies in giving New Hampshire's Underground Railroad activity a more well-defined historical perspective.

There is a significant gap in the literature on the Underground Railroad and the involvement of the Whites. It was well established by local tradition, published in local magazines as early as 1880, that the Whites operated a station on the Underground Railroad out

¹² Michelle Arnosky Sherburne, *Slavery and the Underground Railroad in New Hampshire* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2016), 15.

¹³ Larry Garra, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 2-3, accessed May 25, 2018, <http://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/snhu-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1124039>.

of their farm on Clinton Street in Concord.¹⁴ The farm property is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, noting its use as a station as one of the primary reasons for its inclusion.¹⁵ In spite of the documented evidence, the Whites and their farm are not included in histories of the Underground Railroad, even those that document the Underground Railroad activities in New Hampshire.

Armenia White was well-known in the state for her work with the women's suffrage movement. The historiography of this movement is replete, and only a few key works will be highlighted here. The first prominent work was Susan B. Anthony's *History of Woman Suffrage*, published in six volumes between 1881 and 1922. It is a somewhat biased work in that it is written from the viewpoint of Anthony and her group of suffragists, and rival suffrage groups are not discussed thoroughly. This is the group with which Armenia White associated, however, so the text is valuable as an insider look at the movement during the time in which Armenia participated most fully. Volume three discusses the origins of the movement in New Hampshire in 1868 led by Armenia's efforts. Anthony wrote, "This society has been unrelenting in its efforts to rouse popular thought, holding annual conventions, scattering tracts, rolling up petitions, and addressing legislatures."¹⁶ The chapter also contains primary source material in the form of Armenia's letters, making this a valuable resource for this research.

In 1959, Eleanor Flexner published a less biased and more all-encompassing history, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States*. As a story of the entire

¹⁴ "Hon. Nathaniel White." *The Granite Monthly* Vol. IV, No. 2 (November, 1880).

¹⁵ Robinson and Holden, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form: White Farm," June 30, 1981, accessed May 20, 2018, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/5c25cc50-d235-407e-b5bd-93c59c35c022>.

¹⁶ Susan B. Anthony, *History of Woman Suffrage, Volume 3* (Rochester, NY: Charles Mann Printing Co.), 370.

social movement, the narrative skips from state to state and includes all national activity. New Hampshire is only briefly mentioned, and when it is, it is in reference to referendums or conventions where the suffrage issue was brought to vote but to no avail.¹⁷

Ellen DuBois' 1998 text, *Woman Suffrage and Women's Rights*, reconceptualizes the movement and brings a new perspective to the issue. The book contains a series of essays by DuBois that cover the historiography of the women's rights movement, a historical overview, and fresh perspectives. There are several chapters dedicated to the suffrage movement in the nineteenth century, and DuBois placed all of this activity in the broader context of the national movement and the struggle for social justice.

Aside from Anthony's *History of Woman Suffrage*, which may be considered more valuable as a collection of primary source documentation rather than an objective history of the movement, the secondary literature contains little to no mention of Armenia White and her involvement in suffrage. Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive history of women's suffrage in the state of New Hampshire, either. Armenia White participated in national conventions and had connections with powerful, nationally-recognized figures such as Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe, Susan B. Anthony, and William Lloyd Garrison. She was a locally-active suffragist who focused her efforts on her home state, however, and the history of state-level movements has yet to capture her diligence.

The Whites were Universalists who helped establish and fund the First Universalist Church in Concord, which was later renamed the White Memorial Universalist Church in their honor. To better understand the religious and cultural implications, the principal text is Ann Lee

¹⁷ Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1959), 213.

Bressler's *The Universalist Movement in America, 1770-1880*, published in 2001. Bressler argued that an examination of nineteenth-century Universalism has a three-fold benefit: it shows the relationship between faith and reason in a fast-growing society, reveals "the emerging emphasis on the individual and the freedom of the self in American society," and displays the decreasing eschatological focus of American culture.¹⁸ Of note is Bressler's discussion of the relationship of Universalism with feminism, because the Whites' church was one of the first in the city to allow women to join their membership (with, perhaps unsurprisingly, Armenia White the first woman to do so). This book serves to establish cultural and religious context for the Whites although it does not mention them directly.

Politics were not the focus of Nathaniel White's career, but it was significant enough to inform a portion of this research. The principal text is Leon Anderson's 1967 publication, *To This Day: the 300 Years of the New Hampshire Legislature*. Anderson's argument was that the ongoing work of the legislature is the "unifying thread that binds together the complex and fascinating story" of New Hampshire's past.¹⁹ Anderson did not make mention of Nathaniel White and his political tenure, but the book serves a larger purpose of providing context for the state's political environment and discusses the meaningful issues handled by the legislature during his service.

A supplementary text for this research is Lex Renda's *Running on the Record: Civil War-Era Politics in New Hampshire*, published in 1997. This book provides a history of New

¹⁸ Ann Lee Bressler, *The Universalist Movement in America, 1770-1880* (Cary: Oxford University Press, 2001), 7, accessed June 3, 2018, <http://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/snhu-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3051835>.

¹⁹ Leon W. Anderson, *To This Day: the 300 Years of the New Hampshire Legislature* (Canaan, NH: Phoenix Publishing, 1981), 10.

Hampshire politics during the Civil War, specifically focusing on how political changes in the nation's capital impacted the state's political alliances. Renda believed that the retrospective voting model, applied to the past, was a valuable tool in understanding why political decisions were made.²⁰ This book is helpful in providing political context for the city of Concord in the mid-1800s, at a time when Nathaniel White was making his first foray into politics.

The secondary literature is quiet on Nathaniel White's political career, and makes no mention of his involvement in a critical decision in New Hampshire's political history. In 1863, the State House was deemed too small to support the administrative functions of the state capital, and in an effort to outbid the nearby city of Manchester, Nathaniel White and a group of Concord leaders and politicians put together a proposal to renovate the existing building. The state accepted Concord's proposal and the capital remained in the city. John Clarke, in his brief biographical sketch of Nathaniel White, noted that he contributed more financially to that proposal than all of the other participants combined.²¹ Discussion of his significance to the ongoing political climate of the city and state is underdeveloped.

Along with the key areas of business, social activism, and politics, this research also highlights aspects of social culture in the nineteenth century, including recreation and entertainment. A significant development in the city was White's Opera House, owned and operated by Nathaniel White. The primary text for this research is Elwin Page's unpublished manuscript, "Materials for a History of White's Opera House: Concord's Entertainment Center,

²⁰ Lex Renda, *Running on the Record: Civil War-Era Politics in New Hampshire* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 2.

²¹ John B. Clarke, *Sketches of Successful New Hampshire Men* (Manchester, NH: John B. Clarke Company, 1882), 171, accessed May 20, 2018, <https://books.google.com/books?id=G9gDAAAAYAAJ>.

1875-1920.” He argued that the presence of the Opera House was a signal that Concord no longer considered itself a country village but embraced its new identity as a municipality.²² This is the most extensive histories of White’s Opera House in existence, and it draws on printed programs and the files of the local *Concord Monitor* newspaper. As such, it plays a valuable contributing role in research of the White family.

While the history of White’s Opera House has been written about at the local level, the Whites’ other forays into the social culture of the city and its surrounding area are mostly unmentioned. One example is the *Armenia White* steamer ship on nearby Lake Sunapee, which was funded in part by Armenia White. There are brief articles in local magazines that talk about the *Armenia White* and the fleet to which it belonged, but a significant history of steamers on the lake is nonexistent. The Whites’ overall impact on the social fabric of the city is, as with other impacts, underdeveloped.

This brief overview of the secondary literature available in connection with the Whites demonstrates a sizeable gap in coverage and a need for more research on this topic. Both Nathaniel and Armenia White were locally active figures who were involved in events that played out nationally, but the localized nature of the majority of their business endeavors and philanthropic activities has contributed greatly to that coverage gap. The prominence of local and community history in relation to more mainstream history is rising, however. David Kyvig and Myron Marty, in their book *Nearby History*, noted that in recent decades, historians have given greater attention to the “importance of family and community history” and the role that these

²² Elwin L. Page, “Materials for a History of White’s Opera House: Concord’s Entertainment Center, 1875-1920,” Unpublished Manuscript, 1920, 1, accessed May 20, 2018, <http://concordnh.gov/1051/Elwin-Page-Manuscripts>.

individuals play in their society.²³ This has contributed to a rise in a new kind of social history that looks at popular culture and the lives of ordinary Americans. Kyvig and Marty wrote, “Uncovering what has taken place over the years in a family, an organization, or a community reveals the origins of conditions, the causes of change, and the reasons for present circumstances.”²⁴ Similarly, the study of one community and family – Concord, New Hampshire, and the Whites – can shed light on the development of the city and the ideas and spaces that shaped its history. The following chapter discusses how this study was carried out.

²³ David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You* (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2010), 9.

²⁴ Kyvig and Marty, *Nearby History*, 12.

Chapter 2: Methodology

As a local history giving attention to the importance of family and community, this project approaches the historical research from a social history perspective. Social history is defined by Jürgen Kocka as “concentrating on social structures, processes, and actions in a specific sense.”¹ It attempts to explain relationships (connections and causalities) that are apparent in the inequalities present in history, in areas such as gender relations, urbanization, or the work and lives of different kinds of people. The historical record surrounding Nathaniel and Armenia White is full of these themes and a social historical approach is logical. This research rests on this methodology and attempts to draw the connections between the inequalities present in Concord in the nineteenth century.

Further understanding of these connections between inequalities comes from an inquiry into human agency, what is often seen as a common theme between the fields of history and sociology. In writing on the relationship between history and sociology, Philip Abrams notes, “Both seek to understand the puzzle of human agency and both seek to do so in terms of the process of social structuring.”² It can be said, then, that the convergence of the two fields occurs in a study of the impact of people on a community and its history, by seeing the way that those people relate to one other within that community. The idea of human agency, though, is, according to Abrams, a paradox, recognizing “simultaneously and in equal measure that history and society are made by constant and more or less purposeful individual actions *and* that

¹ Jürgen Kocka, “Losses, Gains and Opportunities: Social history today,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (Autumn 2003), 21, accessed August 12, 2018, <http://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=http://www.jstor.org/stable/3790308>.

² Philip Abrams, “From *Historical Sociology*,” in *Historians on History* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Longman UK, 2009), 239.

individual action, however purposeful, is made by history and society.”³ Applying these concepts to the historical study of Nathaniel and Armenia White, this research recognizes that the Whites were agents of change within nineteenth-century Concord, and their individual actions were fundamental to Concord’s history and the development of Concord’s society. It also recognizes that the Whites themselves were products of their time and place, and that the individual actions they took were intrinsically hinged on the actions of others who came before them.

The primary source material that underpins this research is housed primarily in the New Hampshire Historical Society’s archive, specifically in the White Family Papers collection spanning the years 1777 to 1992. The collection is comprised mainly of business and personal correspondence and documentation, such as letters and receipts, many of which are signed by either Nathaniel or Armenia White, or are addressed directly to them. It also contains several photographs and physical museum objects.⁴ The historical society has digitized several hundred of the documents contained in this collection and makes them publicly available through its online Collections Catalog.

A second repository with related primary source material is the Concord Public Library, whose local history room (the Concord Room) contains the city’s annual reports dating back to the 1700s, as well as images and other primary source documents from the nineteenth century. The Library has digitized all of these annual reports, as well as the three major Concord histories, including Lyford’s *History of the City of Concord*, along with several unpublished manuscripts

³ Abrams, “From *Historical Sociology*,” 241.

⁴ Sandra L. Wheeler, “Guide to the White Family Papers, 1777-1992, bulk 1840-1880,” New Hampshire Historical Society, accessed January 27, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/NHHS/files/6e/6ef9756c-ae06-48ef-ad8c-02f9f79646e7.pdf>.

that describe life in the city in the nineteenth century. These digitized materials are freely available on the library's website.

The majority of the primary sources that comprise this research are part of the White Family Papers collection at the New Hampshire Historical Society. The included sources are primarily photographs and engravings, as well as letters, postcards, and a few unique museum objects. Each source was carefully chosen for its compelling nature, and its strength as evidence in support of the thesis argument. As for relevance to the topic, since these are the Whites' personal papers, they represent the highest level of relevance to this research. While it is unknown if previous historical studies used the White Family Papers as primary sources, the histories of Concord by Lyford and Bouton used similar source bases as the material included in this collection, including letters and business documentation. More recent studies on aspects of nineteenth-century history, such as the Garvins' *On the Road North of Boston*, also used this kind of primary source material.

Supplementing the historical documents, the public-facing exhibit trail project makes use of vintage postcards from the early 20th century depicting scenes in and around Concord that are directly connected to Nathaniel and Armenia White. The use of postcards is not new in historical research. Norman D. Stevens, writing about the use of postcard collections in libraries, said that a postcard "may contain the only visual image of a building, monument, person, place, or other object at a specific period of time," and that "postcards offer a window in to the world as it was viewed by the society of its time."⁵ In the case of the buildings and spaces that are meaningful to the Whites' story, it is not the case that the postcards contain the only remaining visual images.

⁵ Norman D. Stevens, *Postcards in the Library: invaluable visual resources* (New York: Haworth Press, 1995), 3.

However, they do serve to offer that “window to the world” and show today’s viewers what the late nineteenth-century society felt was important to showcase, and they are visually striking images that are attractive and engaging in exhibit panels.

With one exception, all of the postcards used in the exhibit panels are postcards of places. Postcards of places have their own unique qualities, artistically – they convey a sense of absence, and they strive for what Timothy Van Laar calls “paradigmatic representation.”⁶ In other words, “Postcards are intended to be the best possible representation of something worth communicating and worth remembering.”⁷ The idea of paradigmatic representation reinforces the value of the subject of each postcard. The places within each were considered worthy of memory. That so many places within Concord that were connected to the Whites were considered worthy of memory reinforces the lasting importance of the Whites on the development of the city. Memory and legacy are also key parts of what the exhibit’s intended audience will think about and take home with them after experiencing the walking tour.

⁶ Timothy Van Laar, “Views of the Ordinary and Other Scenic Disappointments,” in *Postcards: Ephemeral Histories of Modernity* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 195.

⁷ Van Laar, “Views of the Ordinary,” 195.

Chapter 3: Specialized Audience

The public-facing product of this research is an exhibit trail that will present several spaces within the city of Concord that relate directly to the Whites and also to Concord's overall growth and development during the nineteenth century. The exhibit is designed to be staged in Concord's White Park, in collaboration with a public history institution such as the New Hampshire Historical Society. As such, the specialized audience is constructed not just to include Concord residents, but with consideration to the New Hampshire Historical Society's mission and general audience.

The New Hampshire Historical Society's identified audience, according to their mission statement, is the "diverse public" that is interested in New Hampshire history.¹ This statement acknowledges and embraces the steadily increasing diversity that has been measured in studies of the state's demographics. However, the sample of people who visit museums is not representative of the population as a whole. According to a report by the American Association of Museums, the demographics of museum visitors in America are less diverse than the general population.² One way to bridge the diversity gap between the mission statement and the general trend in museum visitors is to break outside of the museum walls and bring the physical exhibit to the target audience itself.

The intended audience for this exhibit is the adult population of Concord, with a targeted focus on adults between eighteen and fifty-five years of age. The city has a total population of

¹ "Mission," *New Hampshire Historical Society*, accessed August 10, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/About-Us/Mission>.

² Betty Farrell and Maria Medvedeva, *Demographic Transformations and the Future of Museums*, Center for the Future of Museums, 2010, 5, accessed May 20, 2018, <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Demographic-Change-and-the-Future-of-Museums.pdf>.

around 33,000 people, with a median age of forty years that is trending younger every year. It is not a very diverse city, as U.S. census data shows that 91.3 percent of the population is white.³ However, demographic trends show that diversity in the state is steadily increasing, and as a city, Concord is more diverse than the state itself.⁴ Concord is also an educated city, as nearly 40 percent of the population over the age of twenty-five holds a bachelor's degree or more.⁵ This is high in comparison with the average of just 32 percent nationwide.⁶ This demographic data is valuable in identifying where the target audience can be found, and in turn, where the exhibit could best be staged to reach that audience.

White Park is a twenty-acre park located in the residential area of Concord, next to the University of New Hampshire School of Law campus. It is home to the largest playground in the city and has many well-used walking trails, along with baseball fields, soccer fields, summer hockey rinks, and a swimming pool. These features make it a frequented park by college students, young parents, and other active adults, all who fall squarely within the exhibit's target audience. The fact that it is the park that bears a strong historical connection to the Whites only serves to increase the meaning of the exhibit trail interpretation.

³ U.S. Census Bureau, "General Population and Housing Characteristics: zip code 03303," American Factfinder, 2010 Census data, accessed August 13, 2018, <https://factfinder.census.gov>.

⁴ Kenneth M. Johnson, "New Hampshire Demographic Trends in the Twenty-First Century," *Reports on New England* no. 4 (2012), 15, accessed December 14, 2017, <https://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1163&context=carsey>.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, "Educational Attainment: zip code 03303," American Factfinder, 2016 American Community Survey data, accessed August 13, 2018, <https://factfinder.census.gov>.

⁶ Camille L. Ryan and Kurt Bauman, "Educational Attainment in the United States: 2015," *United States Census Bureau*, March 2016, 2, accessed May 20, 2018, <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p20-578.pdf>.

The exhibit trail is carefully designed to attract this target audience and speak directly to the viewers' sense of identity. Falk and Dierking list seven common types of museum visitors who view exhibits for an identity-related reason: Explorers, Facilitators, Hobbyists, Experience Seekers, Rechargers, Respectful Pilgrims, and Affinity Seekers.⁷ By nature of its location in a public park, the exhibit trail will attract the curious Explorers who happen to encounter it. Again, by breaking outside of the museum walls and bringing the exhibit to the spaces frequented by the target audience, the actual audience can be greatly increased.

While it will attract the Explorers, the exhibit trail is designed to appeal to the Affinity Seekers who are "motivated to visit a particular museum or exhibit because it speaks to their sense of heritage and/or Big "I" identity or personhood."⁸ The Whites can have a broad appeal to today's adults, one hundred fifty years later, because their work (especially in areas of women's and minority rights) speaks directly to the freedoms that citizens of Concord and this nation have today. As they view the exhibit, the audience will feel empowered to engage in important community discussions about these freedoms. They will have the opportunity to hear the voice of Concord's nineteenth-century citizens, and believe that they, too, can speak and be heard. The practical aspects of the exhibit design incorporating the White's story, the details of which are meant to spark such audience engagement, are described next.

⁷ John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013), 62.

⁸ Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited*, 62.

Chapter 4: Project Plan and Historical Narrative

The Nathaniel and Armenia White Exhibit Trail has both a physical and a virtual component. The physical component is an eleven-station exhibit installed on a half-mile section of walking trail in White Park, while the virtual component is a corresponding online exhibit that offers additional images of primary source artifacts, objects, documents and photographs, as well as supplementary information to support the narrative offered on the physical exhibit panels.¹ Both components adhere to the same three overall themes: the Whites' personal lives, their activism and philanthropy, and their legacy in the built environment of Concord and the common good it represents.

These three sections follow the “Attract, Engage, Flip” museum interpretation strategy presented by Stein and Wyman, which involves presenting viewers with material they will expect, then challenging their expectations with engaging content, and then surprising them with something unexpected.² The first section of the exhibit trail presents factual information about the Whites' business and personal lives that some viewers may already know through their personal experiences in the downtown Concord area. The second section, explaining their activism and philanthropy, provides the most visually striking artifacts and challenges viewers' expectations of how directly involved the Whites were in such high-stakes activities. The third section offers surprising connections between the viewers and the park where the exhibit is

¹ See Appendix 1 for an exhibit outline that supports both the physical and virtual components of the exhibit. Physical exhibit posters can be found in Appendix 2, and the online exhibit pages in Appendix 3. The virtual exhibit can be found online at https://elainafisher.omeka.net/exhibits/show/nathaniel_and_armenia_white/introduction.

² Robert Stein and Bruce Wyman, “Nurturing Engagement: How Technology and Business Model Alignment can Transform Visitor Participation in the Museum,” *MW2013: Museums and the Web 2013*, April 17-20, 2013, accessed December 14, 2017, <http://mw2013.museumsandtheweb.com/paper/nurturing-engagement/>.

installed, encouraging a personal connection to the past. Stein and Wyman believe that this exhibit organization strategy will yield a finished product that is “unexpectedly satisfying” to all who view it, and that is the goal with this exhibit trail.³

The following historical narrative tells the Whites’ story. Elements from this narrative are woven together into both the physical and virtual components of the exhibit. As a result, the project presents a cohesive discussion of the Whites and their contribution to Concord history.

Nathaniel White was born February 7, 1811. His parents, Samuel White and Sarah (Freeman) White, lived in Lancaster, New Hampshire. His grandfather, also named Nathaniel White, was an officer in the Revolutionary Army and upon his death in 1809, the *Dartmouth Gazette* remembered him as a kind and generous man, and a friend to the poor and afflicted.⁴ Similar words would be written about the younger Nathaniel White seventy years later. As a boy of just fifteen, he took a position at the Columbian Hotel in Concord in 1826 and proved himself a capable young man who was wise with his income. By his twenty-first birthday in 1832, he purchased an interest in a stage route from Concord to Hanover, a route he often drove himself. He purchased that investment with a loan for \$1,000, and within a year, he had repaid his debt. It was the only time in his life that he would borrow money.⁵

Armenia White was born November 1, 1817, the daughter of John Aldrich and Harriet (Smith) Aldrich. Her family was descendent from George Aldrich, one of the early arrivals from

³ Stein and Wyman, “Nurturing Engagement.”

⁴ “Hon. Nathaniel White.” *The Granite Monthly* Vol. IV, No. 2 (November, 1880).

⁵ John B. Clarke, *Sketches of Successful New Hampshire Men* (Manchester, NH: John B. Clarke Company, 1882), 171, accessed May 20, 2018, <https://books.google.com/books?id=G9gDAAAAYAAJ>.

England to settle in Milford, Massachusetts, and Edward Doten, a *Mayflower* pilgrim.⁶ She was raised as a Quaker, with Moses Aldrich, a noted Quaker preacher in Rhode Island, one of her paternal relatives. When she was thirteen, her father moved the family to Boscawen, New Hampshire, and on her nineteenth birthday in 1836, she and Nathaniel White were married.

Early in their married life, due to Nathaniel's young but growing career as a stage driver, they boarded rather than live in their own home, and in 1840, they moved to a home on Warren Street in Concord. It was in 1848 that they moved to what would be their permanent family home on School Street.⁷ Their home was located just one block from Main Street and the still relatively new State House building, in the heart of the village of Concord (Concord would not transition from village to city until 1853).

Nathaniel's business was rapidly growing and expanding by this time, as was their family – their first son John was born in 1839, followed by his sister Armenia in 1847. Once established in their home on Capitol Street, the Whites added six more children through birth and adoption. The home continued to grow as well – they added and expanded floors and rooms, until the house fronted both Capitol Street and School Street.⁸ The Whites frequently housed visitors in their home, due in no small part to their home's convenient location next to the State House, Nathaniel's position as a prominent businessman, and both Nathaniel and Armenia's political involvement. Armenia regularly hosted her friends and fellow suffragists, including Julia Ward

⁶ "Notable New Hampshire Woman," *The Granite Monthly* Vol. XLII, No. 1 (January, 1910), 3.

⁷ Photograph of Nathaniel White's home, 1890, George W. Perry Scrapbooks, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/551183/nathaniel-white-home-approximately-1890>.

⁸ Nathaniel B. White Mansion, 23 Capitol Street, 1938, George W. Perry Scrapbooks, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/551227/nathaniel-b-white-mansion-23-capitol-street-1938>.

Howe, Lucy Stone, and Susan B. Anthony, who traveled to Concord in support of the movement.⁹

After Armenia's death in 1916, she deeded her home to her surviving daughter, Armenia, who had lived with her and cared for her until her death.¹⁰ By 1938, the home had various uses, including hosting the American Legion in a few rooms on the first floor. The home, along with the their son's home next door, was razed in 1938 in order to make way for the State House Annex, which was deemed necessary in order to house different departments under one roof once again.¹¹

As a stage driver, Nathaniel White was known for strength of character. Professor Edwin D. Sanborn of Dartmouth College was a frequent passenger on Nathaniel's stage route between Concord and Hanover, and he would often ride outside the coach with Nathaniel. In 1859, he published an article in the Lebanon *Free Press* that described Nathaniel as, "trusted by all, suspected by none. He was both a good companion and an honest agent. He never forgot a commission, never violated a trust."¹² Unlike other stage drivers who endured the harshness of the stage road by drinking alcohol, Nathaniel, it was said, was true to his principles and abstained.

⁹ Julia Ward Howe to Armenia White, June 20, 1870, White Family Papers Collection, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/294230/letter-from-julia-ward-howe-to-armenia-white-1870-june-20>.

¹⁰ Armenia S. White, will, dated July 2, 1915, *New Hampshire, Wills and Probate Records, 1643-1982*, accessed August 12, 2018, www.ancestry.com.

¹¹ Razing the Nathaniel White, Jr., Residence, 1938, George W. Perry Scrapbooks, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/551229/razing-the-nathaniel-white-jr-residence-1938-august>.

¹² Clarke, *Sketches of Successful New Hampshire Men*, 175.

In 1842, Nathaniel partnered with his friend Benjamin P. Cheney to form Cheney and Company Express, an express company that covered the route from Boston to Montreal. As Professor Sanborn wrote in 1859, “the honest stageman became the confidential agent of thousands who had messages or property to be conveyed over the road.”¹³ Just a year prior, in the winter of 1841, Nathaniel traveled to Montreal with friends, a trip that may have served as inspiration or preparation for the creation of the express company.¹⁴ The company was known by various names throughout its existence, including Walker & Company Express.¹⁵

By 1853, the company was firmly established as Cheney & Company Express, boasting an exclusive contract with the railroad lines through the state to carry packages and money for patrons to all parts of New Hampshire, Vermont and Montreal, Canada. The company had offices located at major transportation hubs across the region, with Benjamin Cheney working out of the Court Square, Boston office, and Nathaniel White working out of the offices in Concord, located at the Eagle Hotel and the Railroad Depot.¹⁶ After several successful decades and consolidations with other express companies that led it to control the express business in the northeastern United States under the name United States and Canada Express Company, it

¹³ Clarke, 175.

¹⁴ Nathaniel White to Armenia White, February 8, 1841, White Family Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/294509/letter-from-nathaniel-and-harriet-white-to-armenia-white-1841-february-8>.

¹⁵ Walker and Co’s Express, Broadside, 1844, White Family Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/286620/walker-co-s-express-1844>.

¹⁶ G. Parker Lyon, *The New Hampshire Annual Register and United States Calendar for the year 1854* (Concord, NH: G. Parker Lyon, 1854), accessed June 30, 2018, <https://books.google.com/books?id=W0A4AQAMAAJ>.

merged with American Express in 1879, with Benjamin Cheney retaining a lifetime position on its board of Directors.¹⁷

The Eagle Hotel, located across the street from the State House and home to the express company offices, held a meaningful place in Nathaniel White's business career. The original building on the site was the Eagle Coffee House, and it was a popular stop for stage coaches traveling through the city. When Nathaniel was a stage driver, he himself would stop there daily on a route from Nashua.¹⁸ The Eagle Coffee House was destroyed by fire in 1850, and the Eagle Hotel was built in its place in 1851. Nathaniel White had some ownership in the building; a tax receipt from 1853 shows that he was a proprietor of the hotel along with Benjamin Grover and W. H. H. Bailey.¹⁹ Additional bills and receipts from 1855 show that he had financial responsibility for maintenance work, building improvements, and grocery purchases.²⁰

The real estate remained in the White family after Nathaniel's death. In one instance, with Armenia in full management of her late husband's estate, she gave the land behind the building to her son John to construct an addition to the hotel. The only condition was that he

¹⁷ John N. Ingham, "Cheney, Benjamin Pierce," in *Biographical Dictionary of American Business Leaders, Vol. I* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 153, accessed June 3, 2018, <https://books.google.com/books/?id=KRjPBj19i-4C>.

¹⁸ James O. Lyford, *History of Concord, New Hampshire From the Original Grant in Seventeen Hundred and Twenty-Five to the Opening of the Twentieth Century* (Concord, NH: Rumford Press, 1903), 848, accessed May 22, 2018, <http://concordnh.gov/1047/Lyfords-History-of-Concord>.

¹⁹ Tax receipt, August 10, 1853, White Family Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/308582/tax-receipt-1853-august-10>.

²⁰ Receipt from H. M. Robinson, April 9, 1855, White Family Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/308637/receipt-from-h-m-robinson-1855-april-9>.

could not sell alcoholic beverages on the property, in keeping with Nathaniel and Armenia's strict support of the temperance movement.²¹

In addition to the express company and real estate holdings like the Eagle Hotel, Nathaniel White also heavily invested in railroads, especially those in the northern portion of the state. He was on the board of directors for a number of railroad lines, including the Mount Washington Railroad, the three-mile length of line from the base of Mount Washington to the summit. Operating today as the Cog Railway, the Mount Washington Railroad was chartered in 1858 and opened in 1872 as the world's first mountain-climbing cog rail line, and it remains to this day the second steepest railway in the world.²²

By 1874, Nathaniel White had long been a wealthy man, and a generous one. He purchased a vacant lot on the corner of Park Street and Main Street, just on the other side of the State House building, with the intent of constructing a building for charitable purposes: a hall for the local young adult dramatic group, the Young People's Union. This group was affiliated with the Universalist Church, of which Nathaniel and Armenia were both members. By the time the building was finished in 1875, the idea had developed into a professional business to be known as White's Opera House, with the Young People's Union given preference for the use of several rooms within the building. Nathaniel White himself, though a man of sixty-four years of age, helped with the building's construction.²³

²¹ Contract, June 9, 1888, White Family Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/308805/contract-1888-june-9>.

²² New Hampshire Board of Railroad Commissioners, *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Railroad Commissioners of the State of New Hampshire, 1879* (Manchester, NH: John B. Clarke, 1879), 57-59, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://books.google.com/books?id=iE0TAAAYAAJ>.

²³ Elwin L. Page, "Materials for a History of White's Opera House: Concord's Entertainment Center, 1875-1920," Unpublished Manuscript, 1920, 10, accessed May 20, 2018, <http://concordnh.gov/1051/Elwin-Page-Manuscripts>.

White's Opera House opened that same year with a celebratory concert by the Germania Band, one of the finest symphonies of the time, visiting from Boston.²⁴ The first dramatic performance soon followed, fittingly performed by the Young People's Union. Within two years, the Young People's Union drifted apart, but for more than thirty years, White's Opera served as Concord's premier entertainment venue, offering lectures, dramatic performances, concerts, and eventually, moving pictures. Nathaniel and Armenia's youngest son, Benjamin, took over management of the Opera after Nathaniel's death in 1880.²⁵ He would go on to inherit the business fully after Armenia's death in 1916.²⁶

By that time, though, the business had already started to wane. The newer Concord City Auditorium attracted the former audiences that frequented the Opera, perhaps by more adequately incorporating moving pictures and understanding audience appeal. On November 30, 1920, a fire in the early hours of the morning destroyed the three-story structure, and while a new building now stands in its place, the Opera House did not reopen. Elwin Page, local judge and writer, would call White's Opera House a proud and successful symbol of Concord embracing its transition from country village to municipality.²⁷

The Whites were ardent believers in equality – a belief that helped shape their religious convictions. The First Universalist Society in Concord was informally organized in 1833 after

²⁴ White's Opera House dedication concert flyer, September 13, 1875, White Family Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/308934/white-s-opera-house-dedication-concert-flyer-1875-september-13>.

²⁵ White's Opera House program, March 1, 1904, White Family Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/308940/white-s-opera-house-program-1904-march-1>.

²⁶ Armenia S. White, will.

²⁷ Page, "Materials for a History of White's Opera House," 1.

the first state convention. In 1842, not long after it was formalized, Nathaniel White became one of the first members of the Universalist Society, and was involved in the construction of the first church building the following year on the corner of School and State Streets. The years between 1843 and 1850 were remembered as a difficult time for the young society, but by 1855, they were free from debt and had constructed a newer, more permanent building – over half of the \$20,000 needed for the construction came from Nathaniel White.²⁸

According to Lyford and other historians writing about the Universalist Church, it was in no small part due to Nathaniel White's generosity that the church survived.²⁹ The Whites' financial contributions, supplemented by Armenia White's strong devotion to suffrage, led to the inclusion of women in the membership of the church – the first church in the city to allow women as members, with Armenia being the first woman to engage in membership in 1869.³⁰ After Nathaniel's death in 1880, Armenia gifted his financial and other holdings in the church to the Universalist Society, and the church was renamed the White Memorial Universalist Church in his honor.³¹

Nathaniel White considered himself a businessman and not a politician, but as later historians would write, "the office sought the man, and not the man the office."³² In 1852, Nathaniel took his first political steps, representing Concord in the state legislature as a member of the Whig party. The causes that formed his platform were temperance, abolition, and suffrage.

²⁸ White Memorial Universalist Church, 1965, Time capsule document, accessed June 26, 2018, <http://www.concordnh.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5501>.

²⁹ Lyford, *History of Concord*, 769.

³⁰ White Memorial Universalist Church, 1965.

³¹ Lyford, 770.

³² Clarke, 173.

In 1869, he brought to the legislature a call for women's suffrage, but it was defeated with a vote.³³ He had the respect of his political colleagues, and in 1875 he was the Prohibition candidate for governor, and in 1876, he was a delegate at the Cincinnati Convention that nominated Rutherford B. Hayes for president. In 1880, he was to be a candidate to represent New Hampshire in the Electoral College, but his untimely death prevented it.³⁴

These honors aside, his long public career as a politician was a relatively quiet one. Behind the scenes, however, Nathaniel's position enabled him to actively influence the political future of Concord and the state as a whole. Originally constructed in 1819, by 1863 the State House building was deemed too small for the rapidly expanding New Hampshire government. The city of Manchester bid \$500,000 to move the capital there and construct a new state house. Nathaniel White and other Concord leaders created a proposal for \$100,000 to expand the existing structure at no cost to the state, a proposal that the state accepted.³⁵ After his death, historians would note that Nathaniel White contributed more towards that proposal than all others combined.³⁶ The State House renovations were completed in 1866. They included the addition of a third floor with a Mansard roof, as well as the replacement of the cupola with a more impressive dome structure. In 1909, the building was again deemed too small, and again,

³³ Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1959), 50.

³⁴ "Hon. Nathaniel White," 52.

³⁵ James L. Garvin, "A History of the New Hampshire State House, 1816-1910," New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, accessed May 20, 2018, https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/publications/documents/state_house_history.pdf.

³⁶ Ezra S. Stearns, *Genealogical and Family History of the State of New Hampshire: A record of the achievements of her people in the making of a commonwealth and the founding of a nation*. Vol. IV (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1908), 1628, accessed May 20, 2018, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=yale.39002001057398;view=1up;seq=10>.

Manchester bid to replace it, but the state chose to keep the capital at Concord. The State House was expanded, replacing the Mansard roof with a full third story, and a three-story addition to the rear of the structure was added, resulting in the State House serves the city today.³⁷

Abolition was a cause that was embraced by both Nathaniel and Armenia White, both inside and outside of the political sphere. When teachings on abolition threatened to divide the Universalist Church in the 1850s, Nathaniel promised that he would take over the financial contributions for any member who left the church because of abolitionist teachings.³⁸ More than just rhetoric, it was a cause they embraced on a deeply personal level. The Whites owned a four hundred-acre farm on Clinton Street in Concord, purchased in 1846, and they opened both their farm and their home on Capitol Street to escaped slaves fleeing north on the Underground Railroad. There is no historical evidence to suggest that Nathaniel used his express company to move escaped slaves north, but some have suggested that may have been the case.³⁹

Rose Winship, the Whites' granddaughter, recalled Armenia telling her stories of slaves hiding in the attic of the family home and the haymow of the family farm, including how in 1857, an escaped slave arrived at the home on Capitol Street. Armenia met him there, and set him to the farm for shelter, food, and protection. While waiting there for a guide to take him further north, he carved a dollhouse for Anna Frances, Nathaniel and Armenia's five-year-old daughter. The dollhouse depicted a slave cabin, complete with furniture and two African-

³⁷ Garvin, "A History of the New Hampshire State House, 1816-1910."

³⁸ Lyford, 769.

³⁹ American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, Region One, *The Underground Railroad in New England* (Boston, MA: American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, 1976), 16-17, accessed May 25, 2018, http://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/me_collection/33/.

American figures. Rose attached a note to the interior panel relaying the provenance of the piece for the benefit of future generations of the family.⁴⁰

While abolition was one cause for which Nathaniel and Armenia were well-known, Armenia was better known for her support of the suffrage movement. Armenia became known as the “First Lady of the Land” in New Hampshire circles for her dedication to the cause and for founding the movement in the state.⁴¹ In 1868, she and fellow activists put out a call for an equal suffrage convention to be held at the Eagle Hotel, with Lucy Stone, a fellow regional activist, scheduled as the visiting speaker.⁴² William Lloyd Garrison, famed abolitionist and friend of the Whites, was also planning to attend, but withdrew at the last minute and instead, wrote Armenia a stirring letter encouraging her and others to continue the fight.⁴³ The letter was read at the convention in December, 1868. As a result of the convention, the New Hampshire Woman Suffrage Association was formed, and Armenia was promptly elected its first president. It was through this association that she conducted much of her work, and won several victories for women’s rights in New Hampshire, including securing school suffrage for women in 1871.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Dollhouse, 1857, White Family Papers Collection, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/Object?id=a1dcc972-f0c3-4022-b163-26ec1e977b21>.

⁴¹ "Notable New Hampshire Woman," 3.

⁴² "Woman’s Suffrage Convention in New Hampshire," *Revolution* 2, no. 24 (December 17, 1868): 370, accessed July 11, 2018, <http://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=h9m&AN=59817627&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁴³ William Lloyd Garrison to Armenia White, December 21, 1868, White Family Papers Collection, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/294212/letter-from-william-lloyd-garrison-to-armenia-white-1868-december-21>.

⁴⁴ Susan B. Anthony, *History of Woman Suffrage, Volume 3* (Rochester, NY: Charles Mann Printing Co.), 375.

Along with their strong support for national social movements like prohibition, abolition, and suffrage, the Whites were liberal with their generous giving to local organizations and charities. The *Granite Monthly* magazine, in tribute articles written after their deaths, lists the following organizations, societies, and causes the Whites patronized throughout their lifetimes: the Anti-Slavery Society, the New Hampshire Insane Asylum (still in operation today as the New Hampshire State Hospital), the Reform Club of Concord, the State Reform School, the Orphan's Home in Franklin, the New Hampshire Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the Mercy Home at Manchester, the American Purity Alliance, the American Peace Society, the New Hampshire Prisoners' Aid Society, the New Hampshire Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the National Indian Association, Ladies' Social Aid Society, the Centennial Home for the Aged, and "scores of others."⁴⁵

The Centennial Home for the Aged on Pleasant Street in Concord, one of the institutions funded by the Whites, was called the "apple of [Nathaniel's] eye," and was a cause near to his heart.⁴⁶ He recognized that there was little support for aging adults in the community who had no family to care for them, and from there, the Centennial Home for the Aged was born in 1876. The first of its kind in New Hampshire, the Home provided lodging and care for up to forty adult women at a time. After Nathaniel's death, Armenia continued to contribute generously to the Home.⁴⁷ It continued to operate until 1994 when increasing healthcare costs and regulatory

⁴⁵ "Notable New Hampshire Woman," 52.

⁴⁶ "Hon. Nathaniel White," 52.

⁴⁷ New Hampshire Centennial Home for the Aged memorial membership, February 7, 1881, White Family Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/308903/new-hampshire-centennial-home-for-the-aged-memorial-membership-1881-february-7>.

oversight forced its closure.⁴⁸ The Centennial Hotel, a luxury hotel and restaurant, thrives in the brick structure today.

Like many other members of Concord's upper class, Nathaniel and Armenia had a retreat home on one of New Hampshire's lakes. Their retreat on Lake Sunapee was called Pine Cliff, and was one of a small community of summer homes in Newbury, a short train ride north of Concord. Train service to the lake began in 1871 with the completion of the Newbury Cut that opened the way for railroad tracks. Many visitors to the lake would board the train in Concord to Newbury, and then take a steamer ship on the lake to the hotel or private residence where they were staying.⁴⁹

To take advantage of the increase in tourist traffic around the lake at that time, Nathaniel White had plans to be involved in the construction of a new hotel in Newbury, along the Concord-Claremont train line. In 1879, he committed to purchasing stock in the new hotel.⁵⁰ He handled payroll matters for work on the hotel's foundation, and by June of 1880, construction was well under way.⁵¹ Within just four short months, Nathaniel White would pass away.

Along with the rambling retreat home, Armenia was also the financial backer for one of the steamer ships that operated on the lake. Named the *Armenia White* in her honor, the ship cost \$17,000 to construct in 1887, and was the flagship of the Woodsum fleet, the successful steamer

⁴⁸ "About Us," Centennial Hotel, accessed August 12, 2018, www.thecentennialhotel.com.

⁴⁹ Paul D. Rheingold, *Lake Sunapee* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2012), 47.

⁵⁰ Agreement, November 12, 1879, White Family Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/308784/agreement-1879-november-12>.

⁵¹ Chester M. Sprague to Nathaniel White, June 3, 1880, White Family Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/308797/letter-from-chester-m-sprague-to-nathaniel-white-1880-june-3>.

fleet controlled by brothers Frank, Daniel and Elias Woodsum. The largest steamer to sail on Lake Sunapee, it was just over 100 feet long, and could carry up to 650 passengers. The *Armenia White* was found to need a new boiler and, with the rising use of automobiles and the decreased use of steamer ships, she was decommissioned in 1917, one year after Armenia's death, and sold for scrap for \$100 twenty-one years later.⁵² After Armenia's death, the Pine Cliff retreat was used as a vacation lodge for tourists. The building was eventually torn down after World War II.

Nathaniel White passed away on October 2, 1880, at the age of sixty-nine. His friend J. H. Gallinger penned a memorial passage that indicated that Nathaniel had suffered from a "catarrhal condition of the head and chest, accompanied by a severe cough" for many years.⁵³ After a trip the previous spring to California, and a summer spent at the family retreat on Lake Sunapee, he had seemed in good health. He passed away peacefully at his farm on Clinton Street with Armenia at his side. Services were held at the Universalist Church, "which were attended by people of all denominations," according to Lyford, a heart-felt response from the community that genuinely appreciated the man and sincerely grieved his passing.⁵⁴

In Nathaniel's memory, Armenia deeded a twenty-acre parcel of land to the city of Concord in 1884, with the intent that the city transform it into a city park. The city brought in Charles Eliot, designer of New York City's Central Park, who recommended that the city do little to change the natural features of the land. His subsequent plan was submitted in 1890 and

⁵² Richard M. Mitchell, "Sunapee Steamers," *New Hampshire Profiles*, August 1962, 20-23, 45, accessed August 29, 2018, http://johngreenwood.net/Sunapee-History/Sunapee_Steamers_NH_Profiles_Aug_1962.pdf.

⁵³ J. H. Gallinger, "Untitled Tribute," in *In Memory of Nathaniel White*, 1881, White Family Papers Collection, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/286609/in-memory-of-nathaniel-white-1881>.

⁵⁴ Lyford, 770.

implemented gradually, as funds permitted. The stone arch bridge was completed in 1896, and Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of the Church of Christ, Scientist, and a Concord native, gifted two swans to the city.⁵⁵

After Nathaniel's death, Armenia managed his vast estate, including his business dealings. She also continued her support of women's suffrage. In 1889, she wrote a letter to the New Hampshire Legislature to notify them of a petition with over 2,000 signatures that she had submitted, pleading for a vote on women's suffrage.⁵⁶ A vote was taken up during New Hampshire's Constitutional Convention in 1902, one which Armenia's well-known friend Susan B. Anthony applauded.⁵⁷ Many representatives spoke eloquently in favor of granting women the right to participate fully in the government. Those in disagreement prevailed, however; the final vote was 177 in favor and 186 opposed.⁵⁸

Armenia White died on May 7, 1916, on a Sunday morning, at the age of ninety-nine. Like her husband, she had the profound devotion of her community, and they dearly grieved her passing. She was remembered for her generosity of time, talents, and wealth, and most solidly, for her unwavering fight for women's suffrage. The *Granite Monthly* magazine wrote in tribute,

The last of all that great coterie of woman-workers for justice and righteousness
in our land, including Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone

⁵⁵ Elizabeth Durfee Hengen and Gary Samson, *Capital Views: A photographic history of Concord, New Hampshire, 1850-1930* (Concord, NH: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1994), 139.

⁵⁶ Armenia White to the New Hampshire Senate and House of Representatives, July 30, 1889, White Family Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/Object?id=989a728b-3bca-493a-9540-5ba301201286>.

⁵⁷ Susan B. Anthony to Armenia White, December 4, 1901, White Family Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/Object?id=41011dc0-9ca0-4e80-9d48-ee9ce659e3a>.

⁵⁸ State of New Hampshire, *Convention to Revise the Constitution, December, 1902* (Concord, NH: Rumford Press, 1903), 709, accessed January 26, 2018, <https://archive.org/details/reviseconstitu00newhrich>.

Blackwell, Mary A. Livermore, Frances E. Willard, Julia Ward Howe and their compeers, Armenia S. White has at last joined her associates on the “other shore”; but, let us fondly hope and believe her influence for every good cause which she espoused, for every noble work in which she engaged, will be felt through the years to come, until success is attained and victory results.⁵⁹

In just a few short years, that victory would be achieved, when, on August 18, 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution was ratified, and women throughout the nation were granted the right to vote.

⁵⁹ “Noble Career Ended: Armenia S. White Passes to the Higher Life,” *The Granite Monthly* Vol. XLVII, No. 6 (June, 1916), 165.

Chapter 5: Budget and Staffing

The proposed budget for the installation of the exhibit trail is \$7,574.00. The table in figure 1 shows the budget outline, followed by a narrative description of its elements.

Budget Category	Amount
Staffing	
Exhibit trail installation and removal	\$0
10 hours, pro bono	
Virtual exhibit publication	\$0
10 hours, pro bono	
Staffing subtotal	\$0
Equipment and materials	
Postcard purchases	\$75
11 postcards, varying costs	
Exhibit trail sled bases	\$6,600
11 bases, \$600 each	
Exhibit panel printing	\$99
11 panels, \$9 each (\$1.50/sq. ft.)	
Equipment and materials subtotal	\$6,774
Licensing and fees	
Image reproduction fees	\$800
16 images, \$50 each	
Licensing and fees subtotal	\$800
Total	\$7,574

Figure 1: Proposed Budget Outline

The staffing needs required to implement the exhibit trail project are minimal. Two people would be needed to complete the installation and later removal of the exhibit from White Park. This would involve inserting the printed exhibit panels into the acrylic face of the exhibit bases, placing the exhibit bases at predetermined points along the trail, and then collecting the

bases at the end of the exhibit period. Given the length of the trail and the weight of the bases, an estimated ten hours is budgeted for this process. It is recommended to engage volunteer labor for these tasks, at five hours per day – one day to install and one day to uninstall.

The only other additional staffing need is the publication of the virtual exhibit. The virtual exhibit currently resides on a private site on the Omeka platform. The New Hampshire Historical Society already possesses PastPerfect software, so for the sake of consistency with other online presentations, the virtual exhibit would need to be migrated to the PastPerfect environment. An estimated ten hours is budgeted for this task, and again, volunteer labor is recommended.

The equipment and materials needed for the physical exhibit comprise the majority of the budget. The exhibit sled bases, such as those that meet the standards of the National Park Service for wayside exhibits, can cost up to six hundred dollars for simple designs.¹ As the exhibit will be temporary, the sled base option will be used in order to facilitate ease of installation and removal, and to prevent permanent damage to the walking trail.

The remaining materials cost includes the purchase of the various postcards used in the exhibits, and the printing cost for the exhibit panels. The Innovation Lab at Southern New Hampshire University's Shapiro Library assesses a fee of \$1.50 per square foot for satin photo prints on its large poster printer.² This fee was used as a basis for the calculation of the printing costs for the eleven panels, each measuring six square feet in size.

¹ "Interpretive Sign Planning," Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, accessed August 10, 2018, http://www.lewisandclark.org/grants/docs/NFS_Interpretive_Sign_Planning.pdf.

² "Access to the Innovation Lab and Makerspace," *Innovation Lab Research Guide*, Shapiro Library, accessed September 9, 2018, <http://libanswers.snhu.edu/makerspace/faq/151135>.

The final budget item is the image reproduction cost for the sixteen images used in the exhibit that are owned by the New Hampshire Historical Society. If the New Hampshire Historical Society is sponsoring this exhibit, the reproduction fees may be waived; however, in the event that they are not waived, it is best to include them in the budget as a precaution. The Digital Image Reproduction fee is twenty-five dollars per image, and the Exhibition fee is an additional twenty-five dollars per image, bringing the total to fifty dollars for each image used.³

There are local grants available that can help offset the cost of this exhibit. The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation is one such grant-making organization. Their “Community Grants Program – Express Grants” initiative offers up to five thousand dollars to nonprofit organizations’ in support of projects with a defined time frame and clear deliverables.⁴ The New Hampshire Historical Society and this project meet all the criteria for this grant program. This grant would not fully cover the budget for the exhibit trail, but the funds would make a considerable contribution to the funding costs.

³ “Image Reproduction Policy,” New Hampshire Historical Society, accessed August 10, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/About-Us/Press-Room/Image-Reproduction-Policy>.

⁴ “Community Grants Program – Express Grants,” New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, accessed August 10, 2018, <https://www.nhcf.org/how-can-we-help-you/apply-for-a-grant/express-grant-program/>.

Chapter 6: Recommendations and Ethical Considerations

There are a few potential ethical or logistical problems that could prove to be obstacles to implementing this proposed project. One initial ethical/legal concern is copyright infringement. Most of the images used in this project are in the public domain or are part of the New Hampshire Historical Society's collections, but a few are from published books or private collections. Permission has been acquired to reprint the images in the finished thesis document, but to bring project to fruition and install it in the park for public exhibition, additional permissions would need to be secured.

The primary ethical concern is the respectful and integral representation of minority voices within the public-facing exhibit trail. The exhibit trail features images of a dollhouse carved by an escaped slave traveling north on the Underground Railroad, and presents a discussion of the Whites' role in the Underground Railroad. There is a two-fold challenge with this exhibit panel. First, in accordance with Garra's argument in *Liberty Line*, the escaped slave should be presented as the agent of his own freedom.¹ Second, by way of acknowledging Sherburne's discussion in *Slavery and the Underground Railroad in New Hampshire*, the historical narrative should not be skewed to present the Whites as "savior" figures, and should show respect for the dignity of enslaved African-Americans.²

To ensure that the exhibit trail successfully meets these challenges, an advisory board should be established to review the use of the dollhouse as an artifact in the exhibit, the narrative

¹ Larry Garra, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 2-3, accessed May 25, 2018, <http://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/snhu-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1124039>.

² Michelle Arnosky Sherburne, *Slavery and the Underground Railroad in New Hampshire* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2016), 15.

surrounding the relationship between the Whites and the escaped slave, and the context of the role of abolition and the Underground Railroad within the Whites' historical narrative. Ideally, the advisory board would consist of African-American members of the Concord community, as well as historians and other scholars in New Hampshire that specialize in this field of study. Other public history institutions who have mounted programs or presentations involving discussions of slavery, racism, and equality acknowledge not only the inherent controversy, but the rather pressing need for historians to bring these discussions to the public.³ The use of an advisory board is a sound way to mitigate the risk of misrepresentation of a socially and culturally sensitive issue.

A logistical concern is the coordination of efforts with a local public history organization like the New Hampshire Historical Society to schedule and implement the project. The historical society is a non-profit organization that is well-staffed in comparison with other local historical societies, but like many non-profit organizations, it often finds itself below desired staffing levels when it comes to the services and support they strive to offer to their members and to the general public. Adding an additional project to their already-established scheduled programming may prove to be a challenge.

Avoiding copyright infringement, integrating respectful representation of minority groups, and navigating staffing and scheduling concerns are not new challenges for public historians. They can be overcome through careful attention to detail, respect for the past and the stakeholders in it (those who hold the copyright, for example, as well as heirs and family members), and by respect for the time and talents of both individuals and organizations who are

³ Stephen L. Cox, "Programming Race, Slavery, & the Underground Railroad," *History News* 54, no. 2 (Spring 1999), 20, accessed August 29, 2018, <http://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=http://www.jstor.org/stable/42655582>.

dedicated to the public expression of history. As with any worthy goal, success can be achieved through patience, mutual respect and collaboration.

The possibilities for future research are extensive. As demonstrated in the historiography, the secondary literature contains only passing references or short biographical descriptions of the Whites. A full length historical treatise on Nathaniel and Armenia White does not yet exist. The future research that such a project would require could involve an extended genealogical history of the White family and a deeper investigation of Nathaniel White's political career, both of which are only briefly touched upon in this project. Additional research about Armenia White and her heavy involvement in the women's suffrage movement would also prove fruitful.

Conclusion

... It is curious to note that nearly every investigation of the principles of Civic Design brings us ultimately face to face with some aspect of our social life, and challenges its methods in one direction or another. It seems impossible to consider tradition in form and structure without being impelled to dig under these to find why such particular forms of structures have secured adoption, and this brings in the whole social history of the human race...

H. V. Lanchester, *Tradition and City Development*, January 1915¹

Rediscovering the development of the city of Concord, New Hampshire, is more than tracing the history of its buildings and spaces, as satisfying as such research may be. As Lanchester noted over one hundred years ago, it is a question of social history to uncover the story behind those buildings and spaces and connect them together with each other, and together with the present. In Concord, many of the city's most iconic and influential spaces in the nineteenth century were constructed or improved through a direct connection with Nathaniel and Armenia White. Concord, in no small measure, owes its continued status as the state capital to Nathaniel White's strength of character and generous nature.

A thoughtful walk through the city today provides ample opportunity to view and appreciate the Whites' far-reaching impact and influence on the local history of Concord. This public history project captures that opportunity and makes it accessible outside of the downtown Concord area through the walking trail exhibit and its virtual component.² This small portion of the city's history, presented and interpreted for Concord's residents, enables its audience to establish connections between the past and their experience in the city they know and love today.

¹ H. V. Lanchester, "Tradition and City Development," *The Town Planning Review* 5, no. 4 (January 1915): 267, accessed August 29, 2018, <http://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://www.jstor.org/stable/40100630>.

² The virtual exhibit can found online at https://elainafisher.omeka.net/exhibits/show/nathaniel_and_armenia_white/introduction.

A history of Nathaniel and Armenia White serves a purpose far beyond the enlightenment of Concord residents. Kyvig and Marty note that the academic interest in community history is strong and shows no sign of subsiding. They write, “The histories of other people, institutions, and communities enrich the understanding of one’s own nearby history, the ways in which it parallels the experience of others, and the respects in which it is unique.”³ Residents in other New Hampshire cities, or in other state capitals across the nation, can enrich their understanding of their own communities through the “nearby history” exemplified here in this research.

The Whites’ story does more than serve as a retelling of Concord’s rich history. Their endless selflessness and generosity underlies their legacy, along with their unceasing devotion to social causes that promoted equality across socioeconomic, gender, and racial divides. This should inspire us to acknowledge the impact that our words and our actions have on our own generation and on the generations to come.

³ David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You* (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2010), 255.

Appendix 1: Exhibit Outline

I. Introduction: Introductory panel with overview of exhibit

II. The Whites' Personal Lives

- A. The Whites' home: Family in the nineteenth century, biographical information about the Whites, current facility on the property
- B. The Eagle Hotel: Transportation in the nineteenth century; Nathaniel White's career
- C. White's Opera House: Entertainment in the nineteenth century, Opera House history
- D. White Memorial Universalist Church: Religion in the nineteenth century, Universalist movement, history of the church

III. Activism and Philanthropy

- A. State House and Politics: Politics in the nineteenth century, Nathaniel's political career and involvement in 1866 State House renovations
- B. State House and Suffrage: Suffrage in the nineteenth century, 1868 equal suffrage convention, 1901 constitutional convention, suffrage victories.
- C. White's Farm: Abolition in the nineteenth century, Underground Railroad station
- D. Centennial Home for the Aged: Philanthropy in the nineteenth century, list of charitable organizations impacted by the Whites, history of the Centennial home

IV. Legacy

- A. Pinecliff, Lake Sunapee: Recreation in the nineteenth century, the *Armenia White*
- B. White Park: Legacy, Nathaniel's death, White Park, Armenia's death

Appendix 2: Exhibit Trail Posters

Nathaniel and Armenia White Exhibit Trail





Engraving of Nathaniel White, 1860-1890
New Hampshire Historical Society Collection, #2010.501.1190, Courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society.



Engraving of Armenia White, 1870-1889
New Hampshire Historical Society Collection, #2010.501.1189, Courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society.

Welcome to the Exhibit Trail!

White Park was donated to the City of Concord in 1884 by Armenia S. White, in memory of her husband, Nathaniel White, who died in 1880. Did you know that Nathaniel and Armenia were staunch abolitionists who operated a station on the Underground Railroad out of their farm on Clinton Street in Concord? Did you know that Armenia was an ardent suffragist who founded the woman's suffrage movement in New Hampshire? The next ten stops on this exhibit trail will introduce you to the Whites and invite you to consider the impact their business ventures and philanthropic endeavors had on Concord in the nineteenth century—an impact that is still visible in many places throughout the city today.

Each stop on the trail includes a map excerpt from an 1892 New Hampshire atlas that shows the location of each building or space impacted by the Whites. Take a close look—you will recognize many of these spaces if you are familiar with Concord! Many stops also feature pictures of vintage postcards. Postcards were wildly popular in the early twentieth century as collectible items, for tourists to document their travels in the days before cameras were readily available. Their popularity and variety give us a beautiful and authentic look into the past, and show us the landmarks that those living at the time thought were important and memorable.

If you have a mobile phone with you, you can scan the QR code located in the upper right corner of each stop for more information. Enjoy your walk!




Map of Exhibit Trail in White Park
Courtesy of Google Maps.


© Elaine Fisher, 2018

This is a school project completed as part of the Masters of History, Public History program at Southern New Hampshire University, and is not affiliated with the New Hampshire Historical Society in any way. The author is grateful to the New Hampshire Historical Society for permission to use their images in this exhibit.


Figure 2: Exhibit trail poster featuring an Introduction to the Whites



Nathaniel and Armenia White's Home



Nathaniel White home, ca. 1890
George W. Perry Scrapbooks Collection, #1974.045.11.005. Courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society.




Postcard depicting State House Annex, ca. 1956

23 Capitol Street, Concord

Nathaniel White, born in 1811, and Armenia White, born in 1817, were married November 1, 1836. Early in their marriage and in Nathaniel's growing career as a stage driver, they boarded in a house on Warren St. In 1848, they moved to their stately home on Capitol St. Nathaniel and Armenia's first child, John, was born in 1839. He was soon followed by six additional siblings: Armenia (1847); Elizabeth (1849); Anna Frances (1852); Nathaniel Jr (1855); Selden (1857), who died in infancy; and Benjamin (1861). They also adopted a daughter, Harriet, although the date of her birth and adoption are not recorded.

Armenia, in particular, was known for the generous hospitality she fostered in her home. An article published in the Granite Monthly shortly after her death remembered the warm and welcoming atmosphere she cultivated there: "A home ever characterized by kindly good cheer, and known as the abode of an unpretentious yet unfailing hospitality, from which no needy sufferer was ever turned away empty-handed, within whose precincts not a few of the notable reformers and humanitarians of the land have been frequent and honored guests, and plans for human betterment have been developed and advanced."

After Armenia's death in 1916, the home had various uses; the American Legion leased several rooms on the first floor until 1937. In 1938, the home and others on the block (including Nathaniel White Jr's home next door) were razed in preparation for the construction of the State House Annex, which is still used today as legislative offices. An underground tunnel connects the Annex to the State House.



Map of Concord from the Town and City Atlas of the State of New Hampshire, D.H. Hurd & Co., Boston, 1892
David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, #2023.001.1. Courtesy of the David Rumsey Map Collection.

Sources

- "Hon. Nathaniel White." *The Granite Monthly* Vol. IV, No. 2 (November, 1880).
- George W. Perry Scrapbooks. 1974.045. New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH.
- "Noble Career Ended: Armenia S. White Passes to the Higher Life." *The Granite Monthly* Vol. XLVII, No. 6 (June, 1916).

Figure 3: Exhibit trail poster featuring the Whites' home

The Eagle Hotel

Engraving depicting the departure of President Pierce from the Eagle Hotel, 1853
New Hampshire Historical Society Collection, #1992.07847. Courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society.

Postcard depicting the Eagle Hotel ca. 1910

110 North Main Street, Concord

Nathaniel White started his business career as a stage coach driver in 1825. He saw the potential in the growing stage industry, and in 1832, he borrowed \$1,000 to invest in a new stage coach line from Concord to Hanover, a loan he quickly repaid as his investments grew and expanded.

In 1842, he formed Cheney and Company Express with his friend and business partner, Benjamin Cheney. This transportation company covered a route from Boston to Montreal that included rail, four-horse team, messenger, and finally, boat transportation. This company, after consolidations that led it to cover all of the northeastern states, eventually merged with the American Express Co. in 1879.

The offices for Cheney and Company Express were located on the first floor of the Eagle Hotel on Main St. in Concord. The Eagle Hotel was constructed in 1851 on the site of the former Eagle Coffee House that had burned the previous year. The Coffee House had served as a stop on the stage lines through the city. As business travel and tourism increased with additional stage and rail lines, the Eagle Hotel expanded and became locally famous as a gathering place for the politically powerful in the state. Nathaniel White was an owner of the hotel and was involved in renovations and modernization efforts.

Today, the Eagle Hotel building is the home to several downtown businesses, including retail shops and a law office. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

Map of Concord from the Town and City Atlas of the State of New Hampshire, D.H. Bond & Co., Boston, 1892
David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, #2023.011. Courtesy of the David Rumsey Map Collection.

Sources

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Figure 4: Exhibit trail poster featuring the Eagle Hotel





White's Opera House

104 North Main Street, Concord

Expanding his business portfolio and presence in the downtown Concord area, Nathaniel White purchased the lot at the corner of Main St and Park St with the intent to construct a building for charitable use. As construction commenced in 1874, the idea grew to use the building as an opera house, as the halls at the nearby Eagle Hotel and Phenix Hotel were no longer large enough to support the theater-going population and the modern stage productions. Nathaniel White worked on some of the construction of the building himself. White's Opera House opened in 1875 with a dedication concert featuring the Germania Band, one of the finest orchestras of the time.

Elwin Page, a local judge and writer, lauded the Opera House as a symbol of Concord embracing its newfound identity as a municipality, having transitioned from village to incorporated city in 1853. The Opera House brought in travelling entertainment and housed local productions, and was, by all considerations, a grand success.

In the early hours of the morning on November 30, 1920, a policeman discovered a fire within the empty building that quickly spread to fully consume and destroy the structure. A new building would eventually be constructed on the site, but the Opera House was not reopened. Concord, at this time, already the new Concord City Auditorium, known affectionately today as the Audi, which was already proving itself more successfully at incorporating moving pictures into its repertoire. Ironically, Nathaniel White had formally opposed the construction of the Audi, fearing it would negatively impact his business, but he was ultimately unsuccessful.



Map of Concord from the Town and City Atlas of the State of New Hampshire, D.H. Hurd & Co., Boston, 1892
David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, #2023.011. Courtesy of the David Rumsey Map Collection.



[Above]: Postcard depicting White's Opera House, ca. 1910



[Right]: White's Opera House dedication concert flyer, September 13, 1875
White Family Papers Collection, #2014.059.003.004.006. Courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society.

Sources

- Page Elwin L. "Materials for a History of White's Opera House: Concord's Entertainment Center, 1875-1920," Unpublished manuscript. 1920. Concord Public Library.

Figure 5: Exhibit trail poster featuring White's Opera House





White Memorial Universalist Church



View of White Memorial Church from the State House Cupola, ca. 1900
New Hampshire Historical Society Collection, #0705.026.011. Courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society.



Universalist Church Banner, 1876-1885
New Hampshire Historical Society Collection, #1983.028.008. Courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society.

School and State Streets, Concord

Nathaniel and Armenia White were passionate about equality of all people, and that influenced their religious convictions. Armenia was raised a Quaker, but together with Nathaniel, she was part of the founding of the Universalist Society in Concord in 1842. They were generous in their financial contributions to the church, helping to securely establish it, finance the construction and later renovations of the building, and donating towards operating expenses when needed.

Universalism as a religion was deeply rooted in concepts of intellectual freedom and love and equality for all, naturally lending itself towards support for the equality of genders, and the Whites were natural supporters in that area. Thanks in no small part to their influence, the First Universalist Church was the first in the city to allow women to join as members, with Armenia being the first to do so.

By the time of Nathaniel's death in 1880, the Whites owned more than half of the pews in the church and more than half of its property. With Nathaniel's death, Armenia gifting those holdings back to the church and at her proposal, the First Universalist Church was renamed the White Memorial Universalist Church in Nathaniel's honor and legacy. The church continued to flourish well into the twentieth century. Eventually, with the denominational merger with the Unitarian church, the White Memorial Universalist Church building was torn down, and the site is now home to the Concord Historical Society.



Map of Concord from the Town and City Atlas of the State of New Hampshire, D.H. Rand & Co., Boston, 1892
David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, #2023.011. Courtesy of the David Rumsey Map Collection.

Sources

- Lyford, John O. History of Concord, New Hampshire From the Original Grant in Seventeen Hundred and Twenty-Five to the Opening of the Twentieth Century. Concord, NH: Rumford Press, 1903.
- "White Memorial Universalist Church." White Memorial Universalist Church, 1965. Time capsule document. Concord Public Library.

Figure 6: Exhibit trail poster featuring White Memorial Universalist Church

Kathleen Aronson White
6
Pete
Pete

The State House and Politics

Drawing of the State House, 1816-1865
From James O. Lyford's *History of Concord New Hampshire, 1903*. Courtesy of the Concord Public Library.

Postcard depicting the State House, ca. 1906

107 North Main Street, Concord

Nathaniel White was appointed a member of the New Hampshire House of Representatives in 1852, representing Concord. Politically speaking, he was a member of the Whig party, an abolitionist, and later, a member of the Republican party. Along with his service in the Legislature, Nathaniel was the Prohibition Party candidate for governor in 1875, and in 1876, he was a delegate at the Republican Convention nominating Mr. Hayes for president. Positions aside, his political career was a quiet one. He considered himself a businessman, not a politician, leading historians to remark that the "office sought the man, and not the man the office."

His political career may have been unremarkable, but his contributions to the State House itself were incalculable. Originally constructed in 1819, by 1863 the building was deemed too small. The city of Manchester bid \$500,000 to move the capital there and construct a new state house. Nathaniel White and other Concord leaders created a proposal for \$100,000 to expand the existing structure at no cost to the state, a proposal that the state accepted. After his death, historians would note that Nathaniel White contributed more towards that proposal than all others combined.

The State House renovations were completed in 1866. They included the addition of a third floor with a Mansard roof, as well as the replacement of the cupola with a more impressive dome structure. In 1909, the building was again expanded, replacing the Mansard roof with a full third story, and adding a three-story addition to the rear of the structure, giving us the State House that we know today.

Map of Concord from the Town and City Atlas of the State of New Hampshire, D.H. Bond & Co., Boston, 1892
David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, #2023.01.1. Courtesy of the David Rumsey Map Collection.

Sources

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- Garvin, James L. "A History of the New Hampshire State House, 1816-1910." New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. n.d. <https://www.nh.gov/nhdnr>.
- "Hon. Nathaniel White." *The Granite Monthly* Vol. IV, No. 2 (November, 1890).
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Figure 7: Exhibit trail poster featuring the State House and politics

White's Farm

Dollhouse depicting slave cabin, 1857
 New Hampshire Historical Society Collection, #2014.037. Courtesy of the
 New Hampshire Historical Society.

144 Clinton Street, Concord

Along with Nathaniel White's express company, real estate holdings, and railroad ventures, the Whites also operated a farm on the outskirts of the city on Clinton Street. Nathaniel purchased the property in 1846 and was continually involved in its business and cultivation. At four hundred acres, it was the largest operating farm in Concord at the time. Little is recorded about the farm as a business venture, but tradition strongly holds that the farm served as a station on the Underground Railroad before and during the Civil War.

As advocates for numerous social causes, the Whites strongly supported abolition, and it was one of the platforms Nathaniel held in his political career. Armenia, also, had a deep involvement, interacting personally with escaped slaves. In one instance, an escaped slave arrived at the Whites' home on Capitol Street in 1857, and Armenia directed him to the farm, where he would receive food, clothing, and a safe haven to rest while he waited for a guide to take him the rest of the way to Canada. While at the farm, the escaped slave, whose name is lost to history, carved a wooden dollhouse for the Whites' five-year-old daughter, Anna Frances. The dollhouse depicted the interior of a slave cabin, and was complete with two African-American figurines as well as furnishings. The family was touched by this generosity, and the dollhouse remained with the family for several generations after Anna Frances' death in 1865.

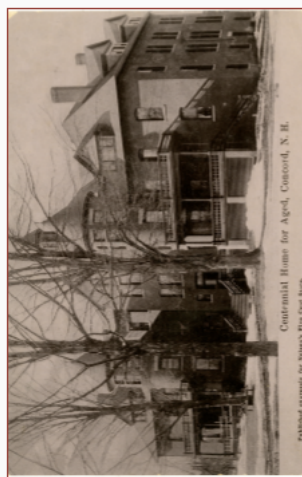
Map of Concord from the Town and City Atlas of the State of New Hampshire, D.H. Hunt & Co. Boston, 1892
 David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, #2023.004. Courtesy of the David
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Sources

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- . White Family Papers. 2014.059. New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH.

Figure 9: Exhibit trail poster featuring White's Farm

Centennial Home for the Aged



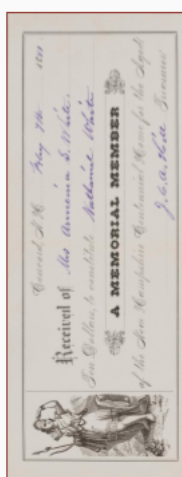
Postcard depicting the Centennial Home for the Aged, ca. 1910

96 Pleasant Street, Concord

Along with their long-standing work with causes like abolition and woman's suffrage, the Whites were actively involved in many community causes and public works projects. One such cause, called "the apple of Nathaniel's eye," was the Centennial Home for the Aged on Pleasant Street. After providing contributions to the New Hampshire Asylum for the Insane (now the State Hospital), Nathaniel realized there was little support for aging adults in the community who had no family to care for them. From that recognition, the Centennial Home for the Aged was born in 1876. The first of its kind in the state, the Home provided lodging and care for up to forty adult women at a time.

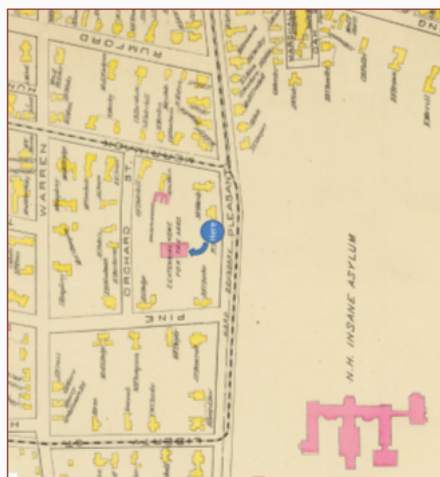
The Whites were benefactors for many other institutions in their community. Along with the Centennial Home and the Asylum, they were also involved with the reestablishment of the State Reform School, the Orphan's Home in Franklin, and the Mercy Home in Manchester. They were also members of organizations, such as the American Peace Society, the Prisoner's Aid Society, and the National Indian Association.

After Nathaniel's death in 1880, Armenia continued to support the Centennial Home for the Aged with financial contributions. In 1992, due to rapid growth and opportunity, the building was replaced with the brick structure that exists on the property today. The Home continued to support the community until 1994, when it closed due to rising healthcare costs and regulatory requirements. The building was renovated to become the Centennial Hotel and Granite Restaurant, the hotel and dining establishment that occupies the property today.



Centennial Home for the Aged memorial membership in Nathaniel White's name, 1881

White Family Papers Collection, # 2014.059.003.002.015. Courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society.



Map of Concord from the Town and City Atlas of the State of New Hampshire,
D.H. Hurd & Co., Boston, 1892

David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, #2023.011. Courtesy of the David Rumsey Map Collection.

Sources

- "Noble Career Ended; Armenia's White Passes to the Higher Life." *The Granite Monthly* Vol. XLVII, No. 6 (June, 1916).
The Centennial Hotel. "About Us." August 2018.
www.thecentennialhotel.com.

Figure 10: Exhibit trail poster featuring the Centennial Home for the Aged

Appendix 3: Online Exhibit Pages

The virtual component of the exhibit trail is an online exhibit published in Omeka (https://elainafisher.omeka.net/exhibits/show/nathaniel_and_armenia_white/introduction). The pages are optimized for viewing on mobile devices, as they are designed to be viewed while walking the half-mile trail in White Park. The first six figures in this appendix show the online exhibit as viewed on a mobile platform, and subsequent figures show it as viewed on a computer.

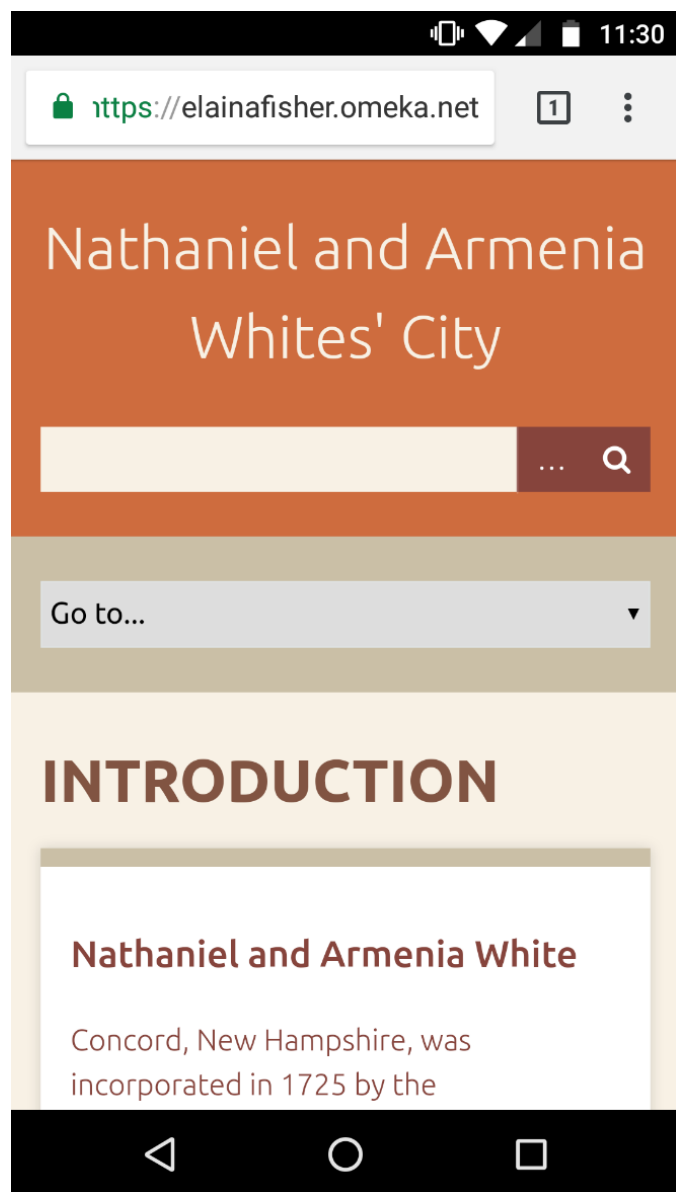


Figure 13: Online exhibit page viewed on mobile device

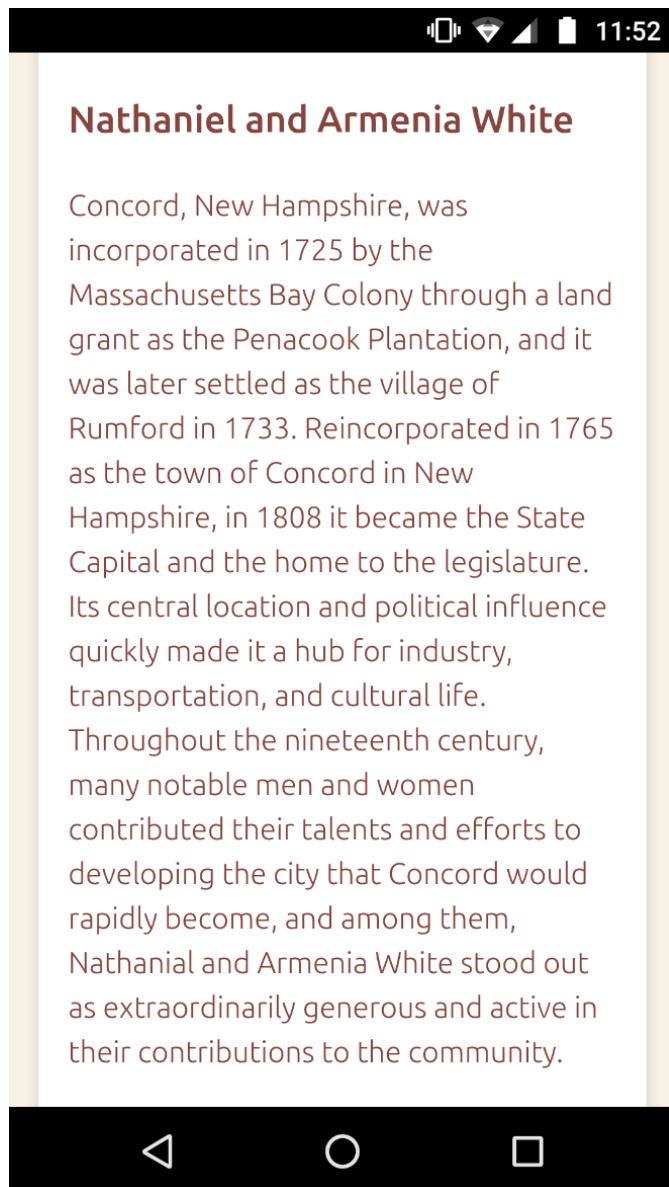


Figure 14: Online exhibit page viewed on mobile device, continued

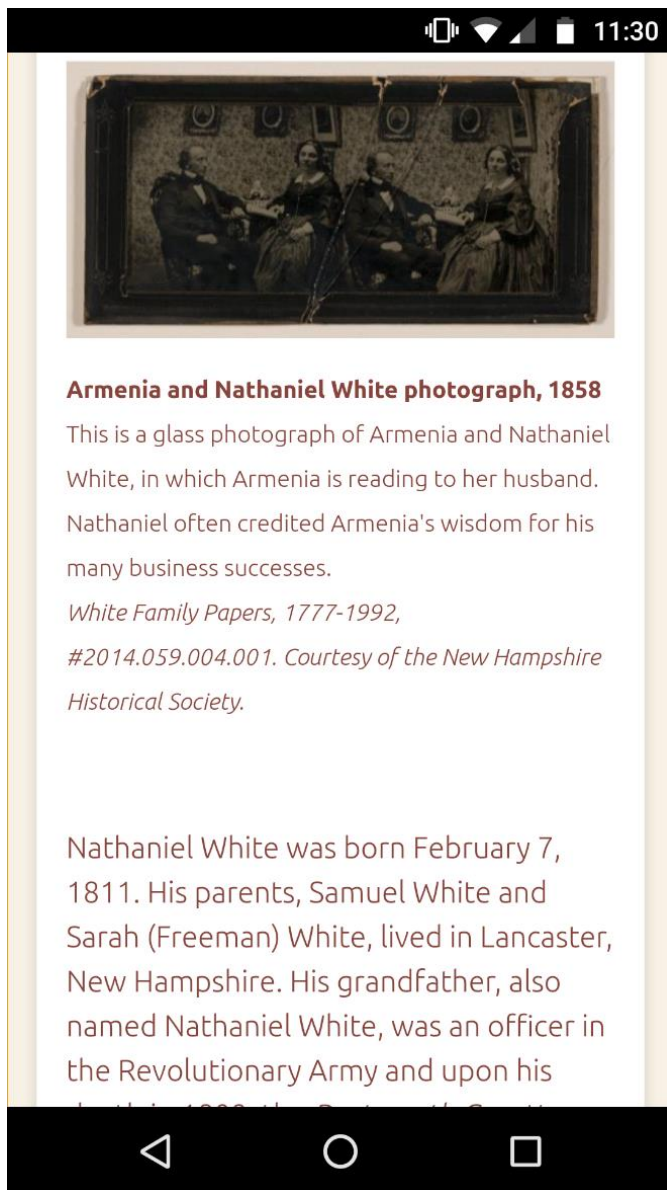


Figure 15: Online exhibit page viewed on mobile device, continued

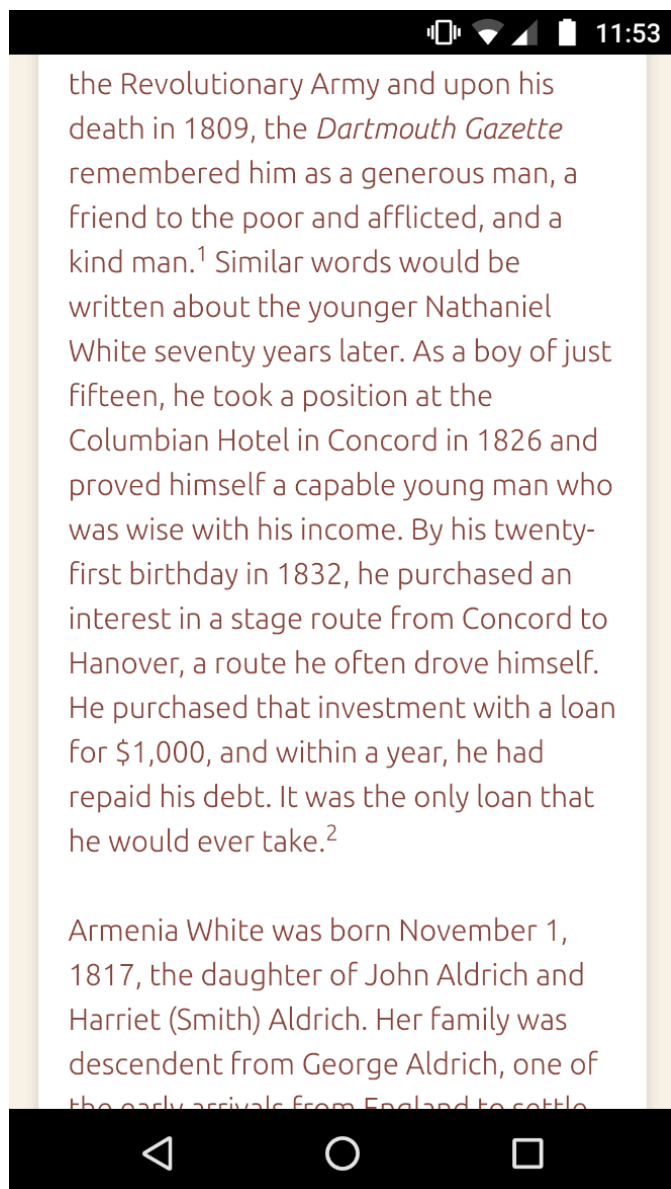


Figure 16: Online exhibit page viewed on mobile device, continued

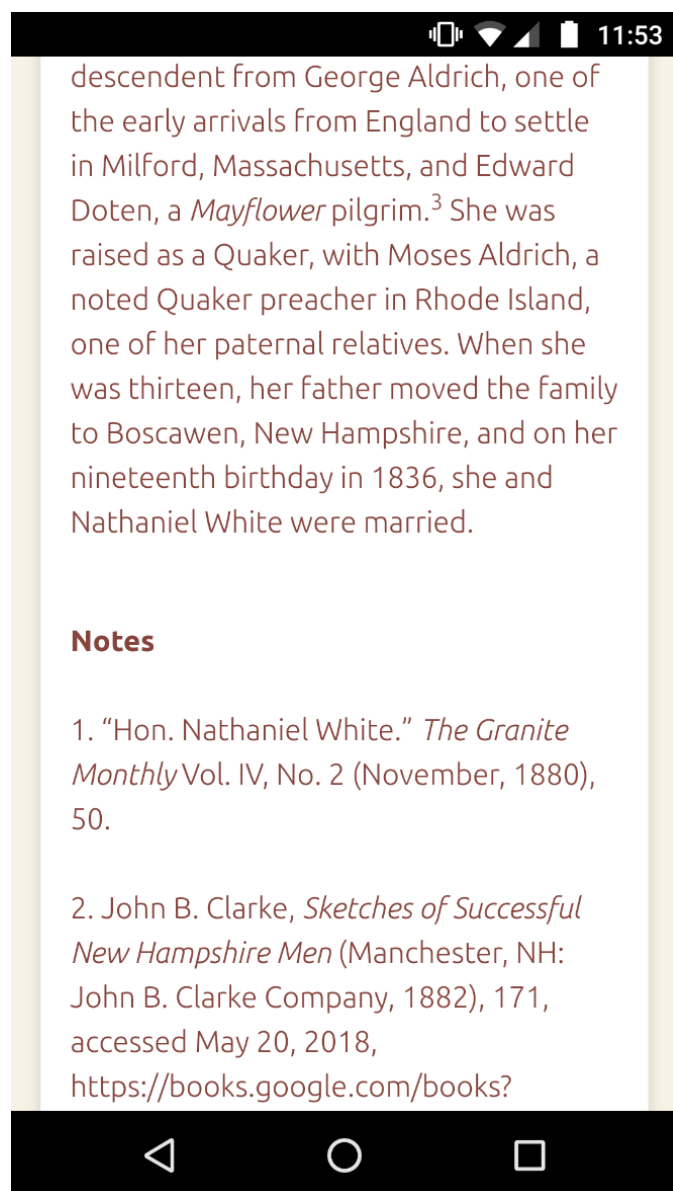


Figure 17: Online exhibit page viewed on mobile device, continued

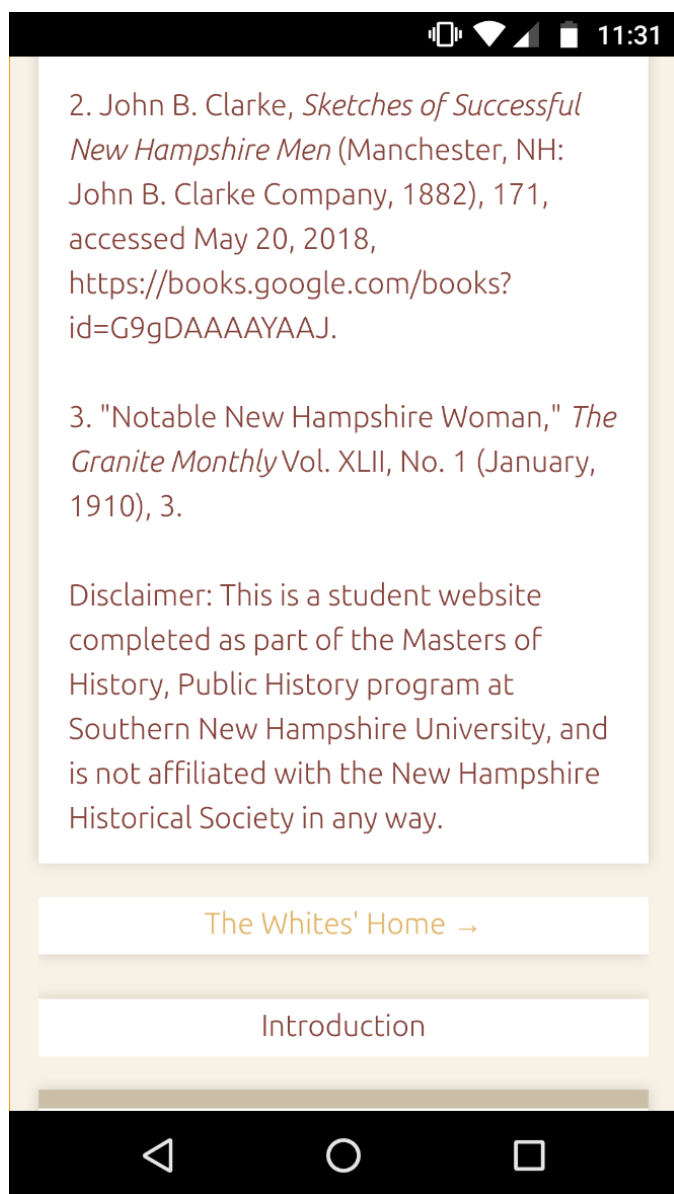


Figure 18: Online exhibit page viewed on mobile device, continued

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https://elainafisher.omeka.net/exhibits/show/nathaniel_and_armenia_white/introduction

Nathaniel and Armenia Whites' City

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INTRODUCTION

Nathaniel and Armenia White

Concord, New Hampshire, was incorporated in 1725 by the Massachusetts Bay Colony through a land grant as the Penacook Plantation, and it was later settled as the village of Rumford in 1733. Reincorporated in 1765 as the town of Concord in New Hampshire, in 1808 it became the State Capital and the home to the legislature. Its central location and political influence quickly made it a hub for industry, transportation, and cultural life. Throughout the nineteenth century, many notable men and women contributed their talents and efforts to developing the city that Concord would rapidly become, and among them, Nathaniel and Armenia White stood out as extraordinarily generous and active in their contributions to the community.



Nathaniel and Armenia Whites' City: 19th Century Concord

Introduction

The Whites' Home

The Eagle Hotel

White's Opera House

White Memorial Universalist Church

The State House and Politics

The State House and Suffrage

White's Farm

Centennial Home for the Aged


Figure 19: Online exhibit page featuring the Introduction

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https://elainafisher.omeka.net/exhibits/show/nathaniel_and_armenia_white/introduction

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White's Farm

Centennial Home for the Aged

Pine Cliff, Lake Sunapee

White Park

Bibliography

Armenia and Nathaniel White photograph, 1858

This is a glass photograph of Armenia and Nathaniel White, in which Armenia is reading to her husband. Nathaniel often credited Armenia's wisdom for his many business successes.

White Family Papers Collection, #2014.059.004.001. Courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society.

Nathaniel White was born February 7, 1811. His parents, Samuel White and Sarah (Freeman) White, lived in Lancaster, New Hampshire. His grandfather, also named Nathaniel White, was an officer in the Revolutionary Army and upon his death in 1809, the *Dartmouth Gazette* remembered him as a generous man, a friend to the poor and afflicted, and a kind man.¹ Similar words would be written about the younger Nathaniel White seventy years later. As a boy of just fifteen, he took a position at the Columbian Hotel in Concord in 1826 and proved himself a capable young man who was wise with his income. By his twenty-first birthday in 1832, he purchased an interest in a stage route

Figure 20: Online exhibit page featuring the Introduction, continued

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Secure | https://elainafisher.omeka.net/exhibits/show/nathaniel_and_armenia_white/introduction ☆

from Concord to Hanover, a route he often drove himself. He purchased that investment with a loan for \$1,000, and within a year, he had repaid his debt. It was the only loan that he would ever take.²

Armenia White was born November 1, 1817, the daughter of John Aldrich and Harriet (Smith) Aldrich. Her family was descendent from George Aldrich, one of the early arrivals from England to settle in Milford, Massachusetts, and Edward Doten, a *Mayflower* pilgrim.³ She was raised as a Quaker, with Moses Aldrich, a noted Quaker preacher in Rhode Island, one of her paternal relatives. When she was thirteen, her father moved the family to Boscawen, New Hampshire, and on her nineteenth birthday in 1836, she and Nathaniel White were married.

Notes

1. "Hon. Nathaniel White." *The Granite Monthly* Vol. IV, No. 2 (November, 1880), 50.
2. John B. Clarke, *Sketches of Successful New Hampshire Men* (Manchester, NH: John B. Clarke Company, 1882), 171, accessed May 20, 2018, <https://books.google.com/books?id=G9gDAAAAYAAJ>.
3. "Notable New Hampshire Woman," *The Granite Monthly* Vol. XLII, No. 1 (January, 1910), 3.

Disclaimer: This is a student website completed as part of the Masters of History, Public History program at Southern New Hampshire University, and is not affiliated with the New Hampshire Historical Society in any way.

Figure 21: Online exhibit page featuring the Introduction, continued

Figure 22: Online exhibit page featuring the White's home

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Centennial Home for the Aged

Pine Cliff, Lake Sunapee

White Park

Bibliography



Nathaniel White Memorial Page

This is an excerpt from the *Town and City Atlas of the State of New Hampshire*, D.H. Hurd & Co., Boston, 1892. The two drawings of the Whites' home show the extent of the construction, from Capitol Street to School Street.

David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, #2023.013. Courtesy of the David Rumsey Map Collection.

Figure 23: Online exhibit page featuring the White's home, continued

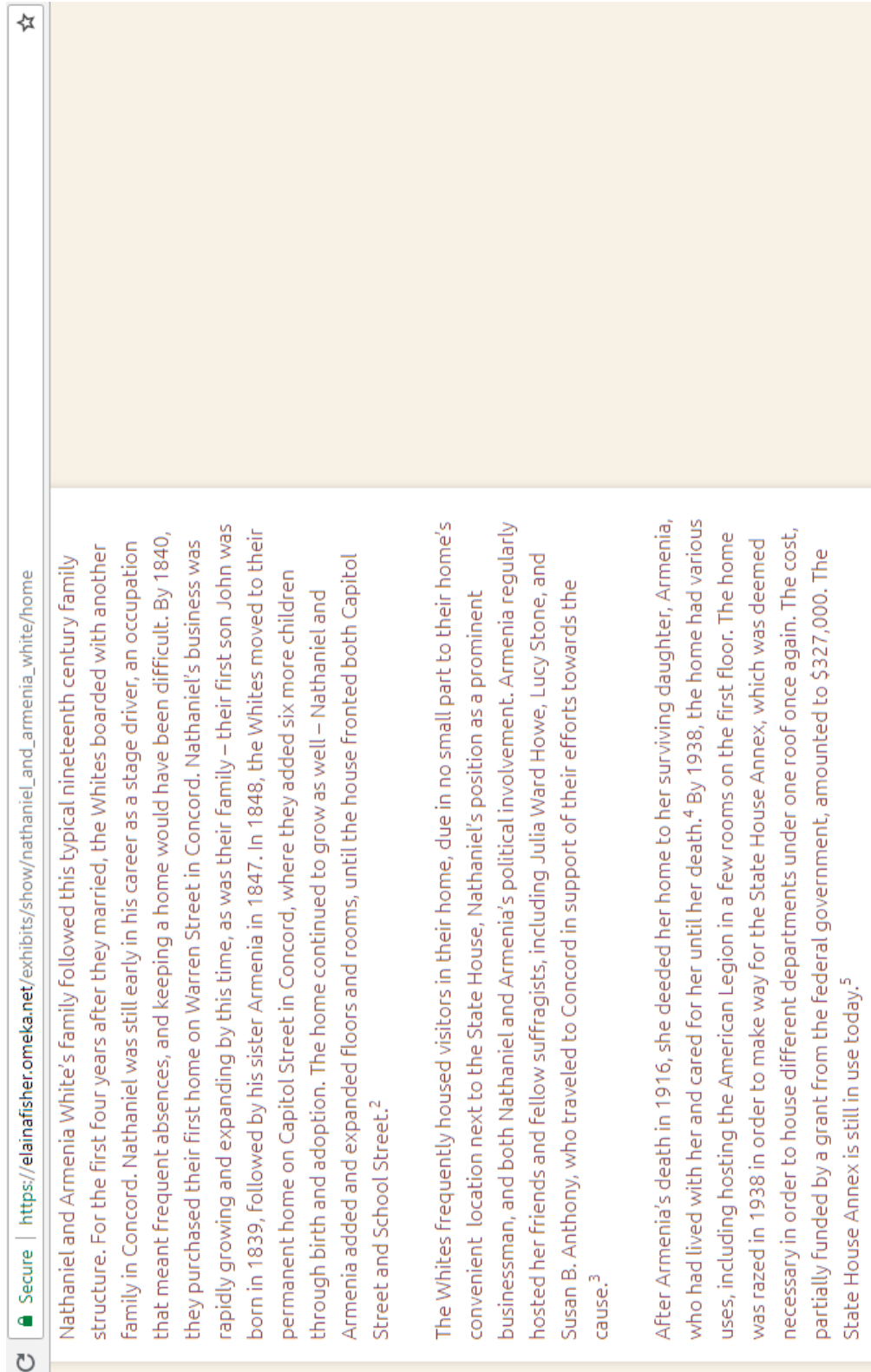



Figure 24: Online exhibit page featuring the White's home, continued

 Secure | https://elainafisher.omeka.net/exhibits/show/nathaniel_and_armenia_white/home

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Notes

1. Tamara K. Hareven, and Maris A. Vinovskis, eds., *Family and Population in 19th Century America* (Princeton University Press, 1978), 14-17, accessed August 29, 2018, <http://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt13x0r7t>.
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3. Julia Ward Howe to Armenia White, June 20, 1870, White Family Papers Collection, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.nhhistory.org/object/294230/letter-from-julia-ward-howe-to-armenia-white-1870-june-20>.
4. Armenia S. White, will, dated July 2, 1915, *New Hampshire, Wills and Probate Records, 1643-1982*, accessed August 12, 2018, www.ancestry.com.
5. New Hampshire Department of State, *Manual for the General Court, 1977* (Concord, NH: Department of State, 1977), 124.

← Introduction

The Whites' Home

The Eagle Hotel →

Figure 25: Online exhibit page featuring the White's home, continued

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https://elainafisher.omeka.net/exhibits/show/nathaniel_and_armenia_white/eagle_hotel

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Nathaniel and Armenia Whites' City

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THE EAGLE HOTEL

Transportation in the Nineteenth Century

Transportation in the nineteenth century had expanded and evolved greatly to meet the needs of New Hampshire citizens and their fellow New Englanders. From its earliest days, the sea and waterways were essential paths for transporting people and possessions inland. Population centers like Concord grew up along the rivers, away from the coast. Over time, roads between cities, towns and rural villages suggested a more efficient path of transportation, and the area saw a flurry of new turnpike roads, traversed by horse and carriage. From there, the railroads made their way through and absorbed much of the traffic.¹

CHENEY & Co.'s.

Boston, Concord and Montreal

EXPRESS.

The subscribers having an exclusive contract with the

Nathaniel and Armenia Whites' City: 19th Century Concord

Introduction

The Whites' Home

The Eagle Hotel

White's Opera House

White Memorial Universalist Church

The State House and Politics

The State House and Suffrage

White's Farm

Centennial Home for the Aged

Figure 26: Online exhibit page featuring the Eagle Hotel

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 | https://elainafisher.omeka.net/exhibits/show/nathaniel_and_armenia_white/eagle_hotel

THE EAGLE HOTEL AND GENTRAGE

White's Farm

Centennial Home for the Aged

Pine Cliff, Lake Sunapee

White Park

Bibliography

CHENEY & Co.'s,
Boston, Concord and Montreal
EXPRESS.

The subscribers having an exclusive contract with the Directors of the Concord, Northern, Vermont Central, Passumpsic and Concord & Claremont Railroads, to run cars with the Passenger Trains daily on said Roads, for the transmission of Packages, Money, Merchandise, &c., respectfully give notice that they will forward all articles in their line of business daily each way, (Sundays excepted.) Packages will be forwarded to all parts of New-Hampshire, Vermont, and the Canadas.

Offices at RAILROAD EXCHANGE, Court Square, Boston; at Eagle Hotel Block and at Railroad Depot, Concord; at J. S. Cheney's (opposite the City Hall) Manchester; at Emerson's Store, Hanover; at J. W. Howe's, Montpelier, Vt.; at N. Y. Express Offices, Burlington, Vt., and Montreal, Canada; R. Tubbs, Wells River, Vt., S. C. Butler, Stanstead.

The Express Train for Montreal and Stanstead leaves Boston on Tuesday, and returns on Saturday of each week.

N. B.—The subscribers are alone responsible for the loss or injury of any articles, or property of any description entrusted to their care, nor is any risk assumed by the Railroad Companies that are designated.

NATHANIEL WHITE, Concord, N. H.,
B. P. CHENEY, Railroad Exchange, Court Square, Boston.
Sept. 20, 1853.

H. A. NEWHALL,
—DEALER IN—
DRY GOODS, CARPETINGS,
Room Paper and Painted Curtains.

Figure 27: Online exhibit page featuring the Eagle Hotel, continued

H. A. NEWHALL,
—DEALER IN—
DRY GOODS, CARPETINGS,
Room Paper and Painted Curtains.
—ALSO—
AGENT FOR THE MALDEN DYE HOUSE,
Low's Brick Block, Concord, N. H.



Advertisement for Cheney & Co. Express, 1854

This advertisement for Cheney & Co. Express appeared in the *The New Hampshire Annual Register and United States Calendar for the year 1854*, published by G. Parker Lyon.

Public Domain

And so the scene was set for Nathaniel White, who began driving a stagecoach as early as 1832. As a stage driver, Nathaniel White gained a reputation for strength of character. Professor Edwin D. Sanborn of Dartmouth College was a frequent passenger on Nathaniel's stage route between Concord and Hanover, and he would often ride outside the coach with Nathaniel. In 1859, he published an article in the *Lebanon Free Press* that described Nathaniel as, "trusted by all, suspected by none. He was both a good companion and an honest agent. He never forgot a commission, never violated a trust."² Unlike other stage drivers who endured the harshness of the stage road by drinking alcohol, Nathaniel, who was a known supporter of the temperance movement, was reputed to have abstained.

Figure 28: Online exhibit page featuring the Eagle Hotel, continued


Secure | https://elinafisher.omeka.net/exhibits/show/nathaniel_and_armenia_white/eagle_hotel


In 1842, Nathaniel partnered with his friend Benjamin P. Cheney to form Cheney and Company Express, an express company that covered the route from Boston to Montreal. As Professor Sanborn wrote in 1859, "the honest stageman became the confidential agent of thousands who had messages or property to be conveyed over the road."³ The company had offices located at major transportation hubs across the region, with Benjamin Cheney working out of the Court Square, Boston office, and Nathaniel White working out of the offices in Concord, located at the Eagle Hotel and the Railroad Depot.⁴ After several successful decades and consolidations with other express companies that led it to control the express business in the northeastern United States under the name United States and Canada Express Company, it merged with American Express in 1879, with Benjamin Cheney retaining a lifetime position on its board of Directors.⁵

In addition to the express company and real estate holdings, Nathaniel White also heavily invested in railroads, especially those in the northern portion of the state. He was on the board of directors for a number of railroad lines, including the Mount Washington Railroad, the three mile length of line from the base of Mount Washington to the summit. Operating today as the Cog Railway, the Mount Washington Railroad chartered in 1858 and opened in 1872 as the world's first mountain-climbing cog rail line, and it remains to this day the second steepest railway in the world.⁶

Notes

1. Edward C. Kirkland, *Men, Cities and Transportation: A Study in New England History 1820-1900, Vol. I*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), 6, 92.

Figure 29: Online exhibit page featuring the Eagle Hotel, continued

Secure | https://elainafisher.omeka.net/exhibits/show/nathaniel_and_armenia_white/eagle_hotel

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← The Whites' Home

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Figure 30: Online exhibit page featuring the Eagle Hotel, continued

Figure 31: Online exhibit page featuring White's Opera House

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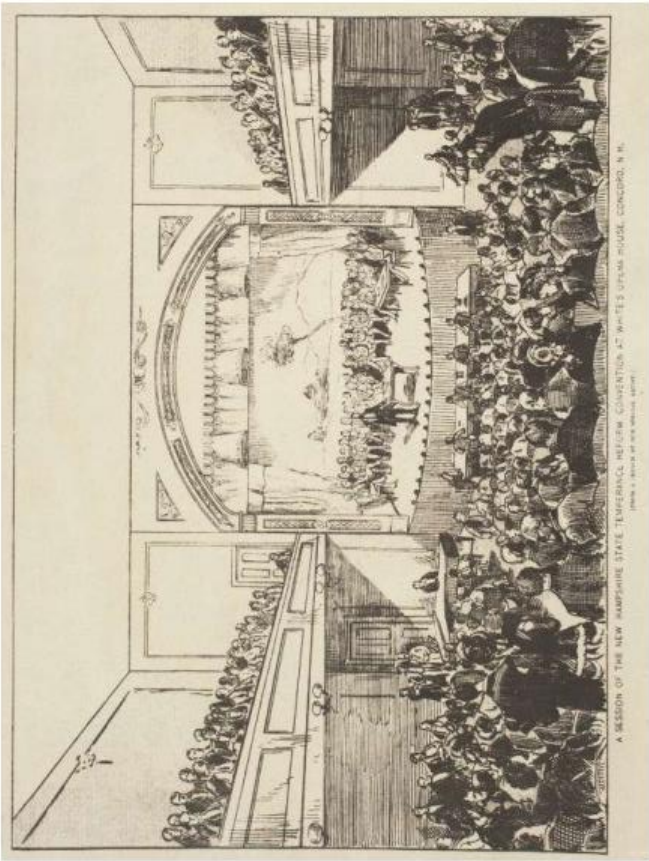
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Bibliography



A SESSION OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE TEMPERANCE REFORM CONVENTION AT WHITE'S OPERA HOUSE, CONCORD, N. H.
(This is a view of the interior of the building.)

Session of the New Hampshire State Temperance Reform Convention at White's Opera House, 1876

This illustration of a temperance reform convention held at White's Opera House shows the interior of the building.

Elwin Page's unpublished manuscript, "Materials for a History of White's Opera House." Courtesy of Concord Public Library.

Figure 32: Online exhibit page featuring White's Opera House, continued

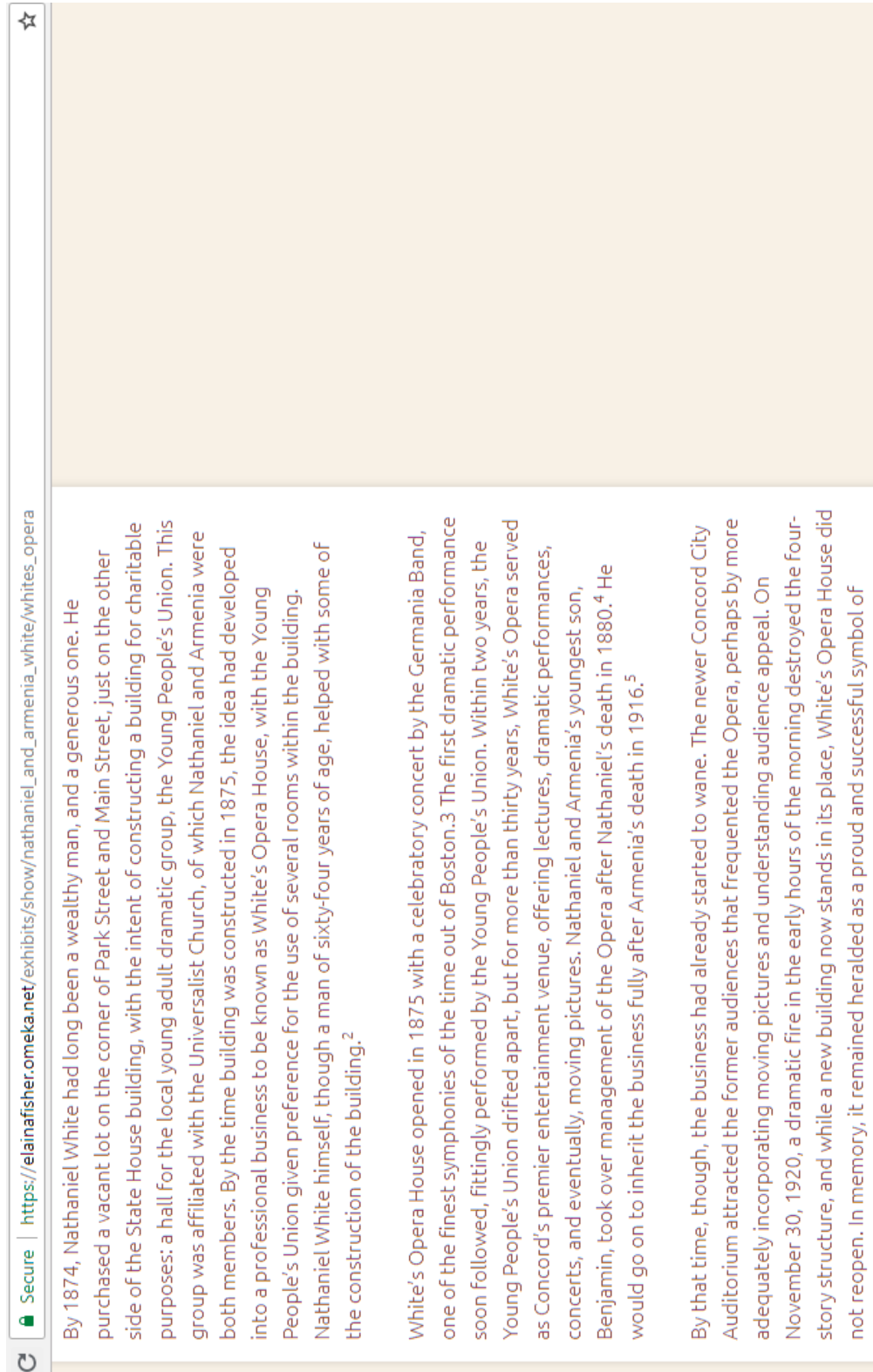



Figure 33: Online exhibit page featuring White's Opera House, continued

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Figure 34: Online exhibit page featuring White's Opera House, continued

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WHITE MEMORIAL UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

Religion in the Nineteenth Century

During the nineteenth century, few aspects of American society remained unchanged from the century previous. The idea of universal salvation had already started spreading across America in the late 1700s, where the new liberal American republic was open to embracing the idea. In the early nineteenth century, a few traveling New England preachers began teaching Universalism in earnest, and the denomination quickly began to expand. Many members of the fast-growing American society sought a more definitive relationship between faith and reason, and there was a greater emphasis on the individual and their personal freedom, all of which led to a decreasing reliance on the religious doctrines of their fathers.¹ The new Universalist societies focused rather on the goodness and service that their members could do in their community.

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Figure 35: Online exhibit page featuring White Memorial Universalist Church

84

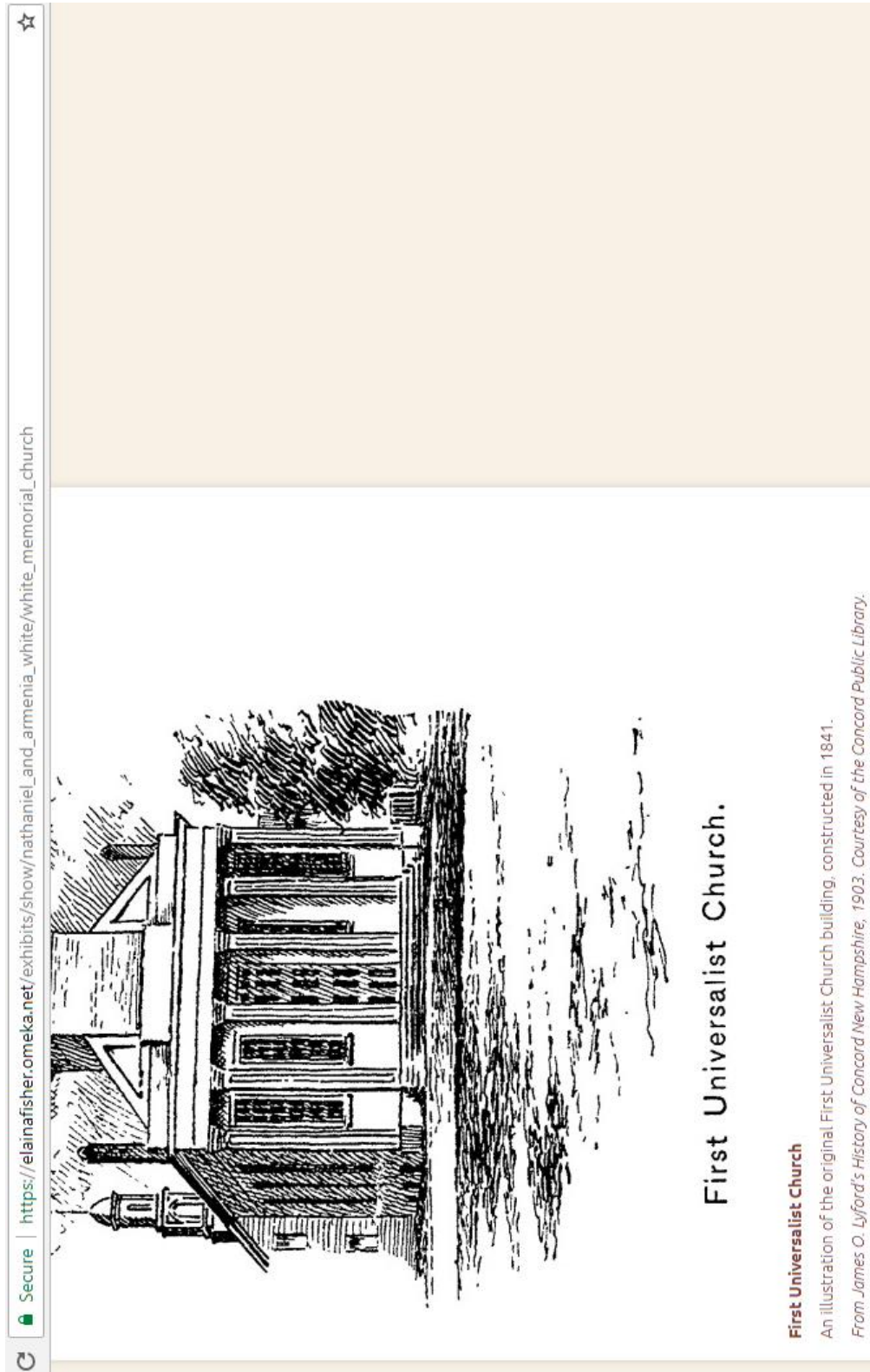


Figure 36: Online exhibit page featuring White Memorial Universalist Church, continued

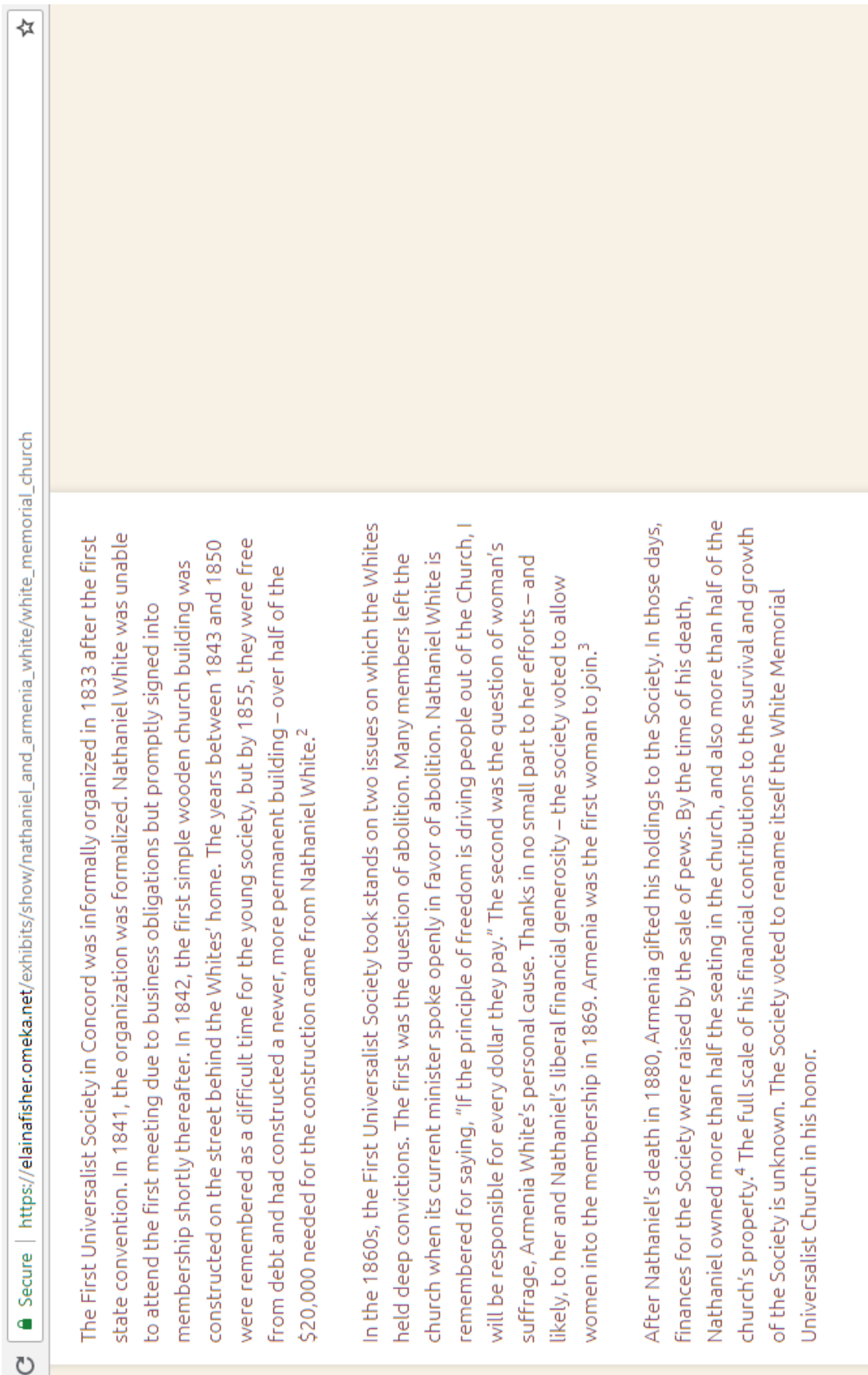




Figure 37: Online exhibit page featuring White Memorial Universalist Church, continued

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church's property.⁴ The full scale of his financial contributions to the survival and growth of the Society is unknown. The Society voted to rename itself the White Memorial Universalist Church in his honor.

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[← White's Opera House](#)

[White Memorial Universalist Church](#)

[The State House and Politics →](#)

Figure 38: Online exhibit page featuring White Memorial Universalist Church, continued

Figure 39: Online exhibit page featuring the State House and politics

☆ https://elainafisher.omeka.net/exhibits/show/nathaniel_and_armenia_white/state_house_politics

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View of the Capitol of New Hampshire, at Concord, 1852

This wood engraving by an unknown artist appeared in Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion in 1852, and shows the State House in its originally constructed form.

New Hampshire Historical Society Collection, #1992.078.18. Courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society.

Figure 40: Online exhibit page featuring the State House and politics, continued

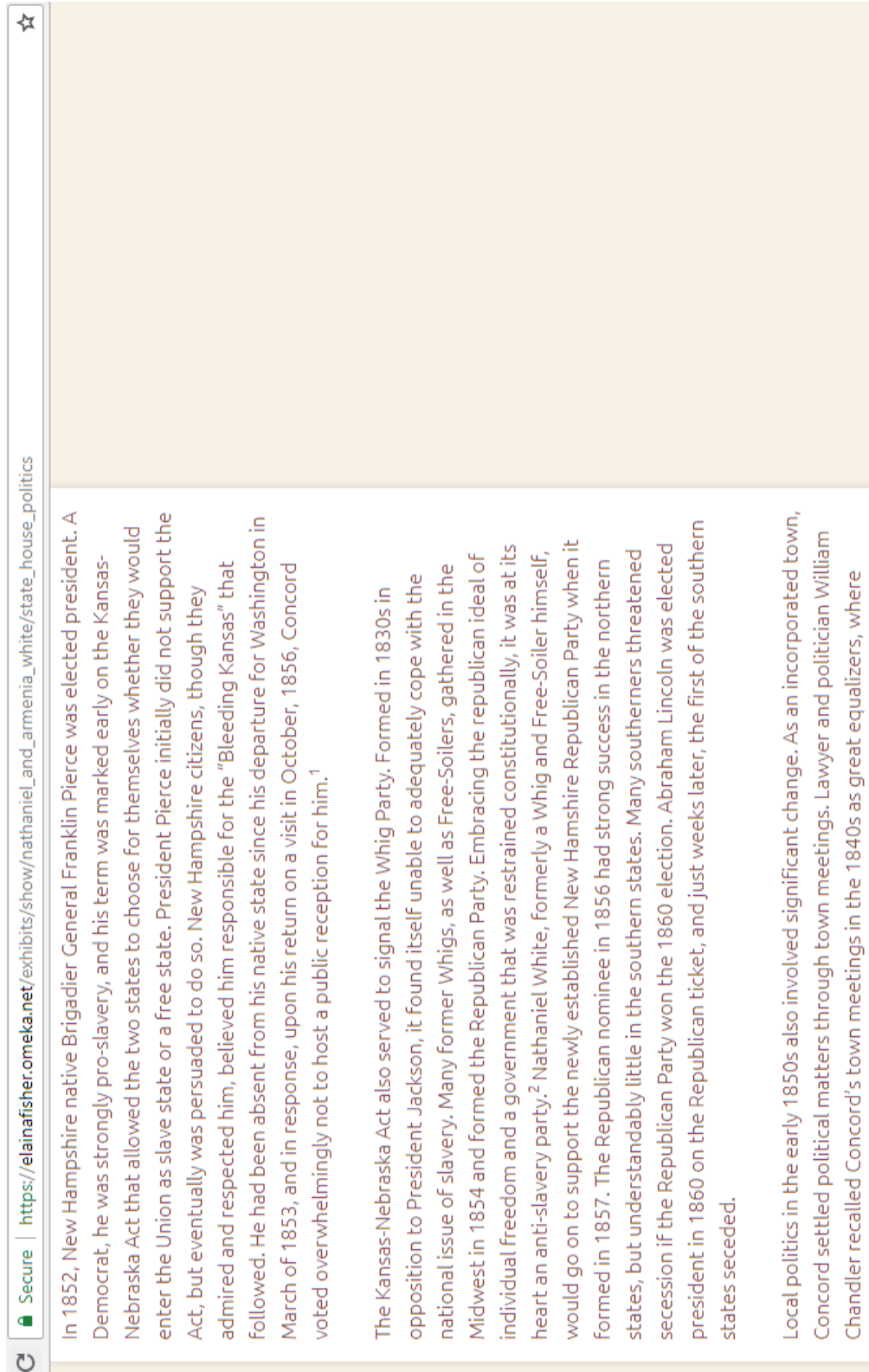


Figure 41: Online exhibit page featuring the State House and politics, continued

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Concord settled political matters through town meetings. Lawyer and politician William Chandler recalled Concord's town meetings in the 1840s as great equalizers, where "Richard Bradley, the farmer, was often more than a match in debate for Franklin Pierce, the lawyer and coming president of the United States."³ Moving to a city form of government became necessary as the community grew, and although the vote to adopt it in 1853 meant a "radical change," in Chandler's memory, it enabled growth, reform and improvement that would otherwise have been lacking.⁴ It was into this new, radical, and reform-focused environment that Nathaniel White took his first political steps.

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White Memorial Universalist Church

The State House and Politics

The State House and Suffrage

Figure 42: Online exhibit page featuring the State House and politics, continued

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THE STATE HOUSE AND SUFFRAGE

Women's Suffrage in the Nineteenth Century

"As civilization advances there is a continual change in the standard of human rights. In barbarous ages the right of the strongest was the only one recognized; but as mankind progressed in the arts and sciences intellect began to triumph over brute force. Change is a law of life, and the development of society a natural growth. Although to this law we owe the discoveries of unknown worlds, the inventions of machinery, swifter modes of travel, and clearer ideas as to the value of human life and thought, yet each successive change has met with the most determined opposition. Fortunately, progress is not the result of pre-arranged plans of individuals, but is born of a fortuitous combination of circumstances that compel certain results, overcoming the natural inertia of mankind. There is a certain enjoyment in habitual sluggishness; in rising each morning with the same ideas as the night before; in retiring each night with the thoughts of the morning. This inertia of mind and body has ever held the multitude in chains. Thousands have thus surrendered their most sacred rights of conscience. In all periods of human development.

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Figure 43: Online exhibit page featuring the State House and suffrage

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thinking has been punished as a crime, which is reason sufficient to account for the general passive resignation of the masses to their conditions and environments."¹

~Excerpt from Chapter 1 of Susan B. Anthony's *History of Woman's Suffrage, Volume 1*

Pine Cliff, Lake Sunapee

White Park

Bibliography

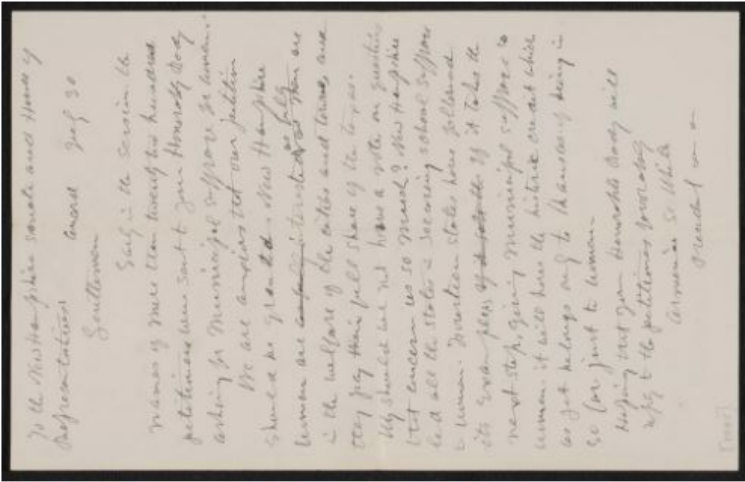




Figure 44: Online exhibit page featuring the State House and suffrage, continued

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Letter from Armenia White to the New Hampshire Senate and House of Representatives, 1889 July 30


In this letter to the New Hampshire legislature, Armenia highlights a petition she circulated that got over 2,000 signatures.


White Family Papers, 1777-1992, #2014.059.001.012.013. Courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society.

Armenia White, long known as the "First Lady of the Land" in New Hampshire for her public fight for woman's suffrage, was the founder and leader of the movement in New Hampshire.² Her connections among the suffragists were extensive, and she counted many notable names as her friends, including Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe, Mary A. Livermore, and Henry B. Blackwell, among others. In 1889, Armenia received a letter signed by these four activists, urging the recipients to write to their representatives and appeal for suffrage. Armenia then wrote her appeal to the New Hampshire Legislature on the back of that letter, crossing out the original message. Armenia's letter is concise and powerful. She first draws the attention of the legislators to a petition she had delivered earlier for their consideration, containing the signatures of 2,200 people. She then invites the legislators to see the examples of other states, and appeals to their pride in letting New Hampshire set a pathway for other states to follow.³

Nathaniel and Armenia were also closely associated with nationally-recognized abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and Parker Pillsbury, both of whom advocated strongly for the cause of woman's suffrage after the Civil War. William Lloyd Garrison was originally slated to speak at the first equal suffrage convention in Concord in 1868, but withdrew at the last minute. Instead, he wrote a letter that was read aloud and well-received, in which he responded to the three most common objections to suffrage, and encouraged persistence in the cause, saying, "One drop of water is very like another, but

Figure 45: Online exhibit page featuring the State House and suffrage, continued

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it is the perpetual dropping that wears away the stone."⁴ When the New Hampshire Woman's Suffrage Association was born out of that convention, Parker Pillsbury was named vice-president, serving under Armenia White.⁵

Notes

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Figure 46: Online exhibit page featuring the State House and suffrage, continued

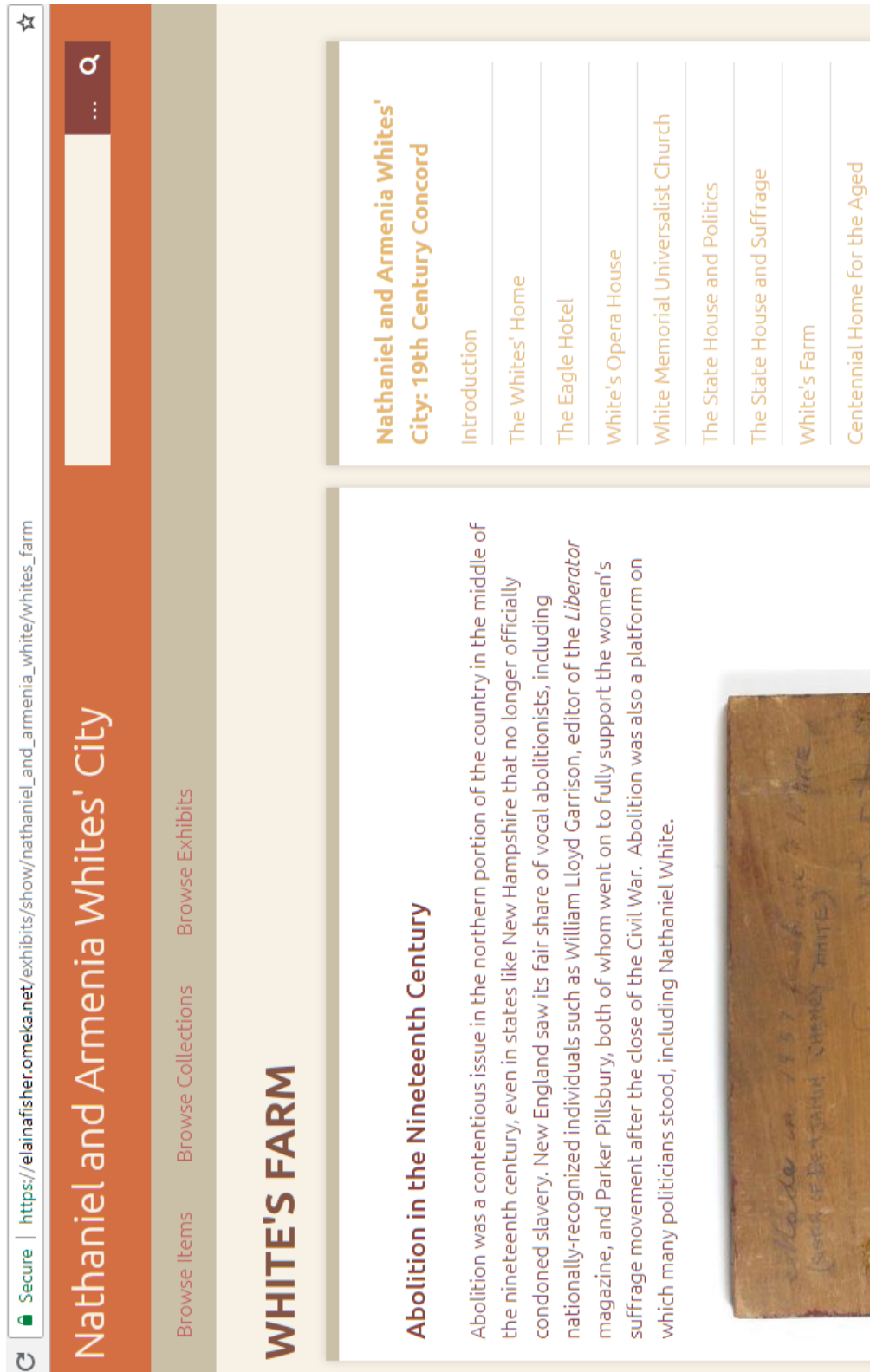



Figure 47: Online exhibit page featuring White's Farm

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https://elainafisher.omeka.net/exhibits/show/nathaniel_and_armenia_white/whites_farm

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This dollhouse was made by an escaped slave, who went to my grandmother's house on Capitol St. in Concord. She sent him to the White Farm on Clinton St. and he waited there with other escaped until the next Guide came through. to conduct them toward Canada. This was the time winter came.

Rose M. Winship

Dollhouse, 1857

This annotation on the interior panel of the dollhouse was added by Rose Winship, Nathaniel and Armenia's granddaughter, and describes her memory of Armenia's tales of her involvement with the Underground Railroad.

White Family Papers Collection, #2014.037. Courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society.



Pine Cliff, Lake Sunapee

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Bibliography

By the end of the nineteenth century, the northern states, New Hampshire included, were proud of their support of abolition. Official local histories had the tendency to gloss over the presence of slavery in the state's earlier years, and as a byproduct, many failed to mention Underground Railroad activity as well, for to acknowledge the Underground Railroad meant they must also acknowledge their part and parcel in slavery.¹ Underground Railroad stations were, by nature, secretive and undocumented, and it is difficult to prove beyond a doubt that a home served to harbor escaped slaves,

Figure 48: Online exhibit page featuring White's Farm, continued


Secure | https://elainafisher.omeka.net/exhibits/show/nathaniel_and_armenia_white/whites_farm


By the end of the 19th century, the northern states, New Hampshire included, were proud of their support of abolition. Official local histories had the tendency to gloss over the presence of slavery in the state's earlier years, and as a byproduct, many failed to mention Underground Railroad activity as well, for to acknowledge the Underground Railroad meant they must also acknowledge their part and parcel in slavery.¹ Underground Railroad stations were, by nature, secretive and undocumented, and it is difficult to prove beyond a doubt that a home served to harbor escaped slaves, even if it contained a secret room. The Underground Railroad was a reality, but much of the traditional lore surrounding its activity in New Hampshire may be more legendary than factual. Of utmost importance is the recognition that the hero in the story is not the overwhelmingly white and rather well-off citizens who opened their homes, but the escaped slaves themselves who were the true agents of their own freedom.²

Although official documentation is understandably lacking, there is a strong tradition to support that Nathaniel and Armenia White operated a station on the Underground Railroad out of their farm on Clinton Street. Rose Winship recalled her grandmother Armenia telling her stories of slaves hiding in the attic of the family home and the haymow of the family farm, including how in 1857, an escaped slave arrived at the home on Capitol Street. Armenia met him there, and sent him to the farm for shelter, food, and protection. While waiting there for a guide to take him further north, he carved a dollhouse for Anna Frances, Nathaniel and Armenia's five-year-old daughter.³ A tribute article about Nathaniel White published in the *Granite Monthly* magazine after his death in 1880 also mentions the use of the family's attic and haymow as places of refuge.⁴ To Nathaniel and Armenia, abolition was more than just rhetoric, it was a caused they embraced on a deeply personal level.

Figure 49: Online exhibit page featuring White's Farm, continued

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in 1880 also mentions the use of the family's attic and haymow as places of refuge.⁴ To Nathaniel and Armenia, abolition was more than just rhetoric, it was a caused they embraced on a deeply personal level.

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← The State House and Suffrage

White's Farm

Centennial Home for the Aged →

Figure 50: Online exhibit page featuring White's Farm, continued

Figure 51: Online exhibit page featuring the Centennial Home for the Aged

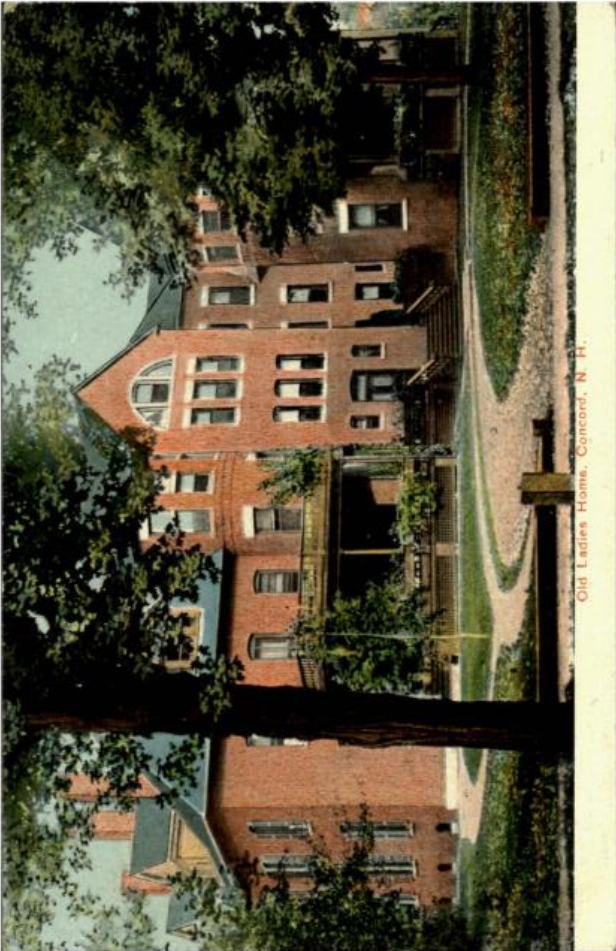
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Postcard depicting the Centennial Home for the Aged, ca. 1910

This postcard shows the Centennial Home in Concord, referring to it as the "Old Ladies Home."

Nathaniel and Armenia White, as members of Concord's upper class, found themselves fortunate to have such surplus wealth. Nathaniel's good business sense (for which he often credited his wife) had quickly made him a wealthy man. Both Nathaniel and Armenia were remembered not only for their consistent giving, but for their sincere and

Figure 52: Online exhibit page featuring the Centennial Home for the Aged, continued


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Nathaniel and Armenia White, as members of Concord's upper class, found themselves fortunate to have such surplus wealth. Nathaniel's good business sense (for which he often credited his wife), had quickly made him a wealthy man. Both Nathaniel and Armenia were remembered not only for their consistent giving, but for their sincere and genuine love for people.³ They gave generously throughout their lives, and Armenia left much of their estate to charitable organizations and benevolent associations in her will.


The charitable organizations in which Nathaniel and Armenia were heavily involved throughout their lifetimes included social welfare organization, including the Orphans Home at Franklin and the Centennial Home for the Aged. Both organizations were created largely at the expense of the Whites, and both focused on providing aid and support to the most vulnerable members of the local population. The Whites were so invested in these charities that they were the first listed in Armenia's will as beneficiaries of permanent funds.⁴ Other benevolent associations also benefited from the Whites' contributions, such as the Universalist Ladies Social Aid Society. The Whites seem to have favored associated giving at the formal level, but it was said that no individual who came to them for aid was turned away.⁵


Notes


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Figure 53: Online exhibit page featuring the Centennial Home for the Aged, continued


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PINE CLIFF, LAKE SUNAPEE

Recreation in the Nineteenth Century

One of the driving forces of social change in the United States in the nineteenth century was rapid industrialization, and along with it, increasing urbanization and economic expansion. Deeply embedded religious traditions, dating back to the Puritans, encouraged a strong work ethic that likely contributed to that rapid economic expansion, but at the same time, it did not allow for much time for leisure activities. By the end of the nineteenth century, the growth of the elite class saw the beginnings of a culture of recreation among those who had dispensable income and an increase in free time.¹

Maxners Pine Cliff Lodge, Newbury, N. H.

83488



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Figure 55: Online exhibit page featuring Pine Cliff, Lake Sunapee

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Figure 56: Online exhibit page featuring Pine Cliff, Lake Sunapee, continued

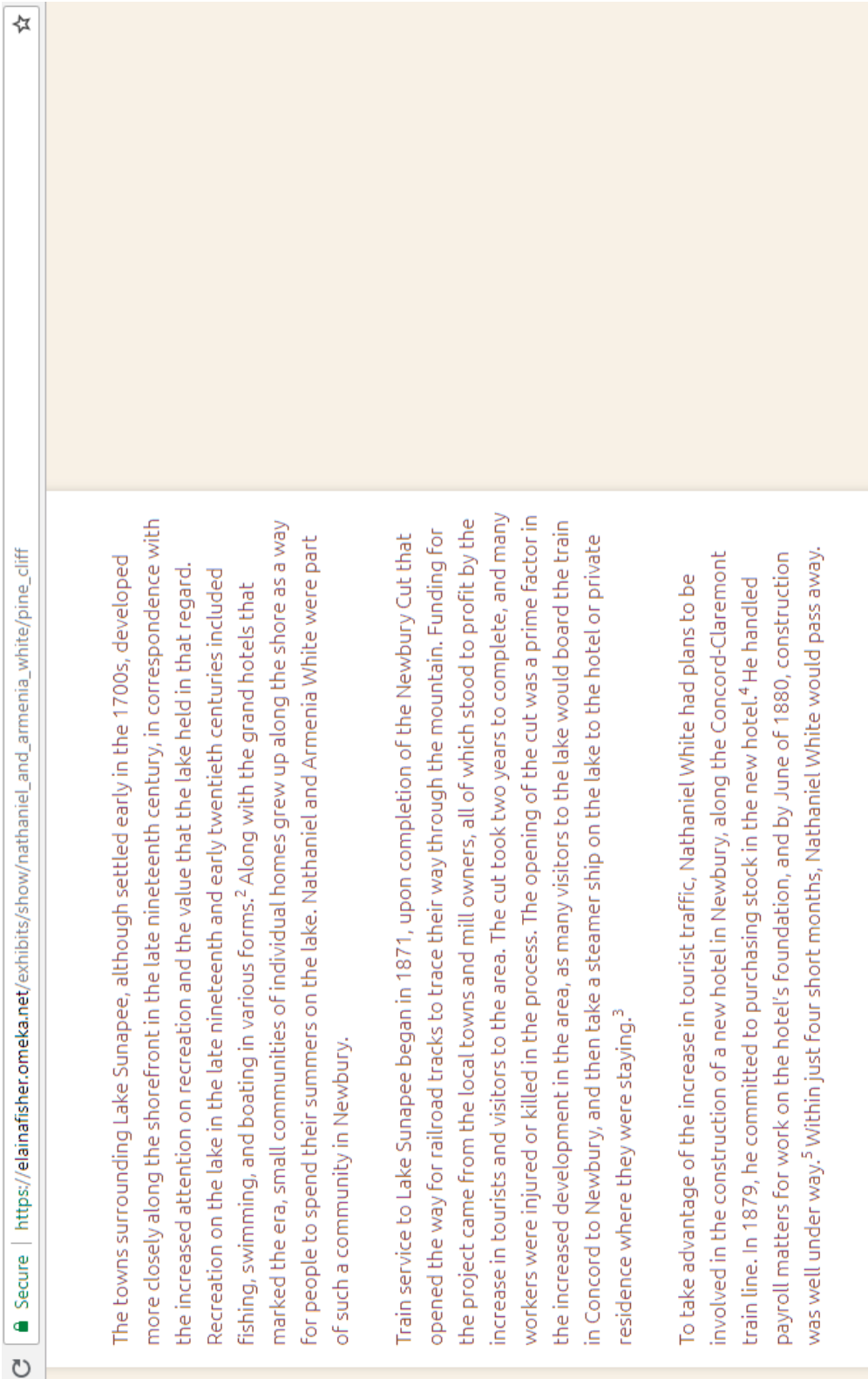


Figure 57: Online exhibit page featuring Pine Cliff, Lake Sunapee, continued

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Figure 58: Online exhibit page featuring Pine Cliff, Lake Sunapee, continued

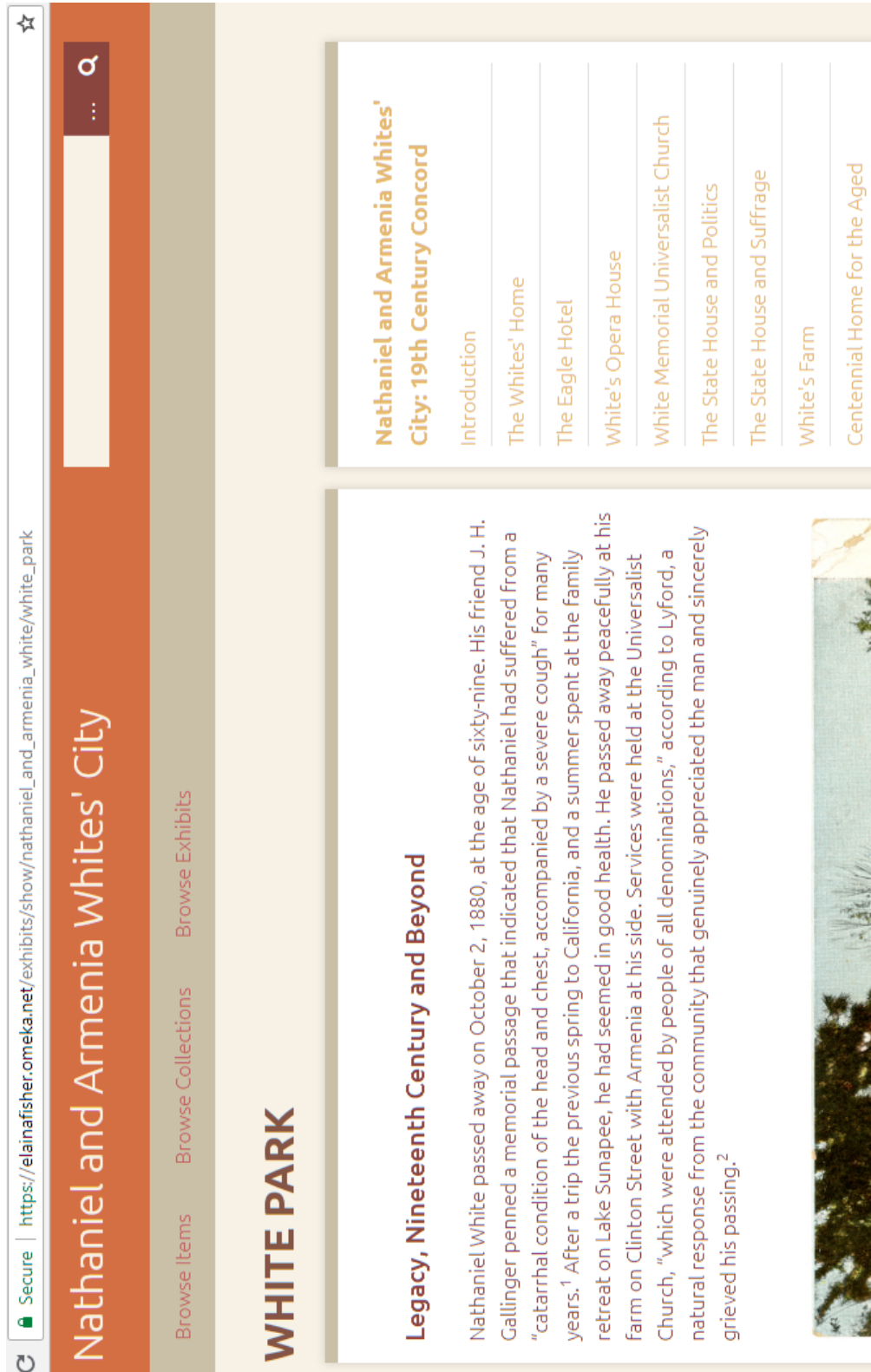
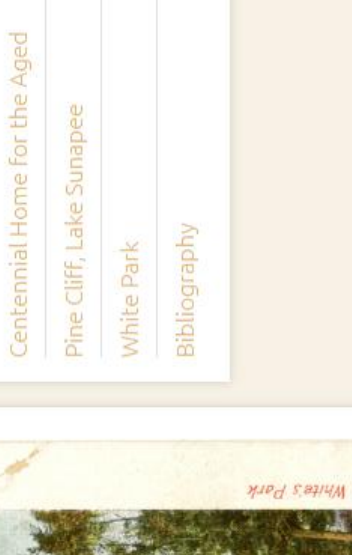


Figure 59: Online exhibit page featuring White Park

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Concord, N.H., Scene in White's Park

Postcard depicting White Park, ca. 1910

This postcard shows the original layout of White Park with two ponds.

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Figure 60: Online exhibit page featuring White Park, continued

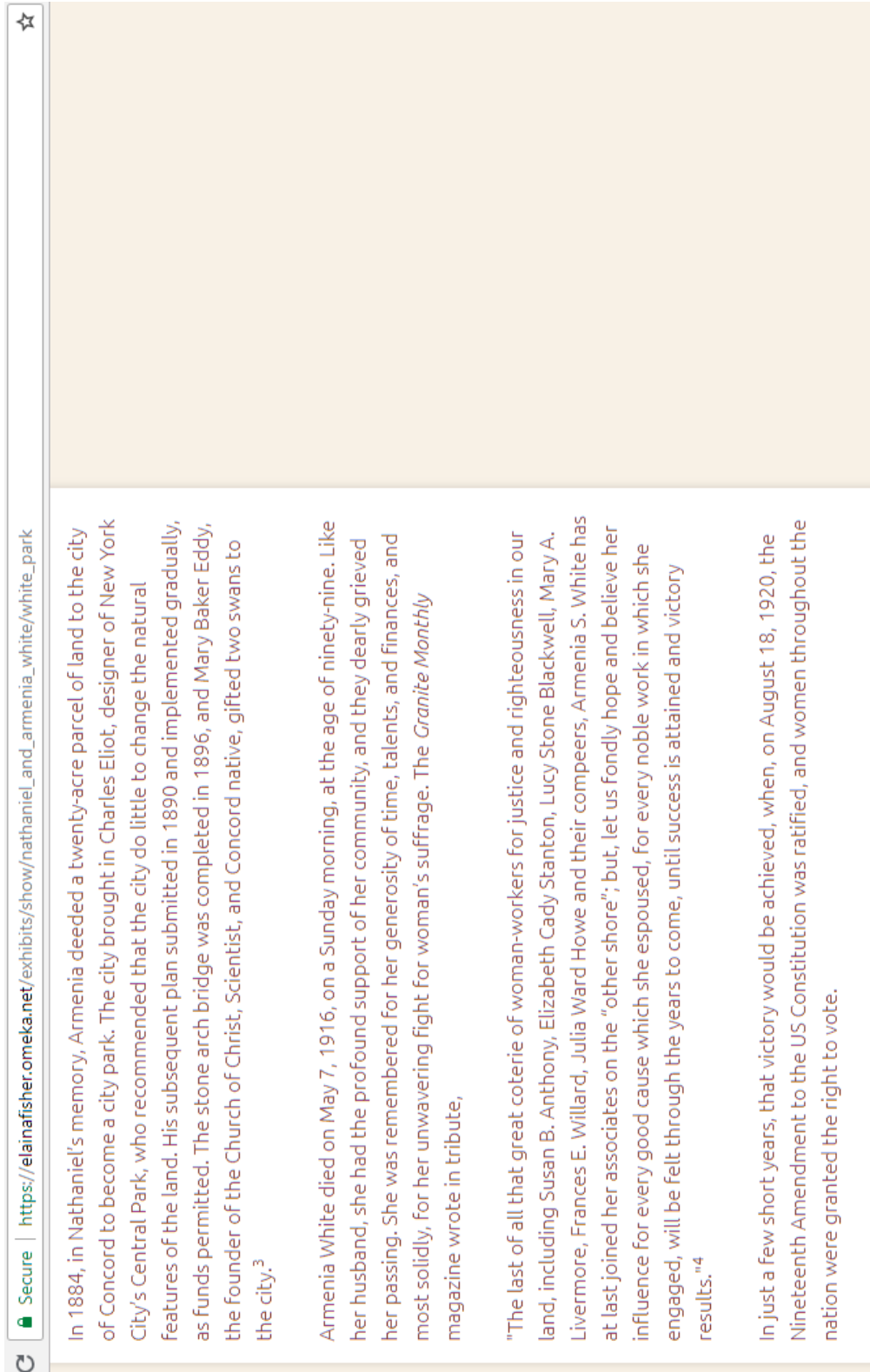




Figure 61: Online exhibit page featuring White Park, continued

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Nathaniel and Armenia Whites' City

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Nathaniel and Armenia Whites' City: 19th Century Concord

Introduction

The Whites' Home

The Eagle Hotel

White's Opera House

White Memorial Universalist Church

The State House and Politics

The State House and Suffrage

White's Farm

Centennial Home for the Aged

Figure 63: Online exhibit page featuring the bibliography

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Pine Cliff, Lake Sunapee
White Park
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Figure 64: Online exhibit page featuring the bibliography, continued

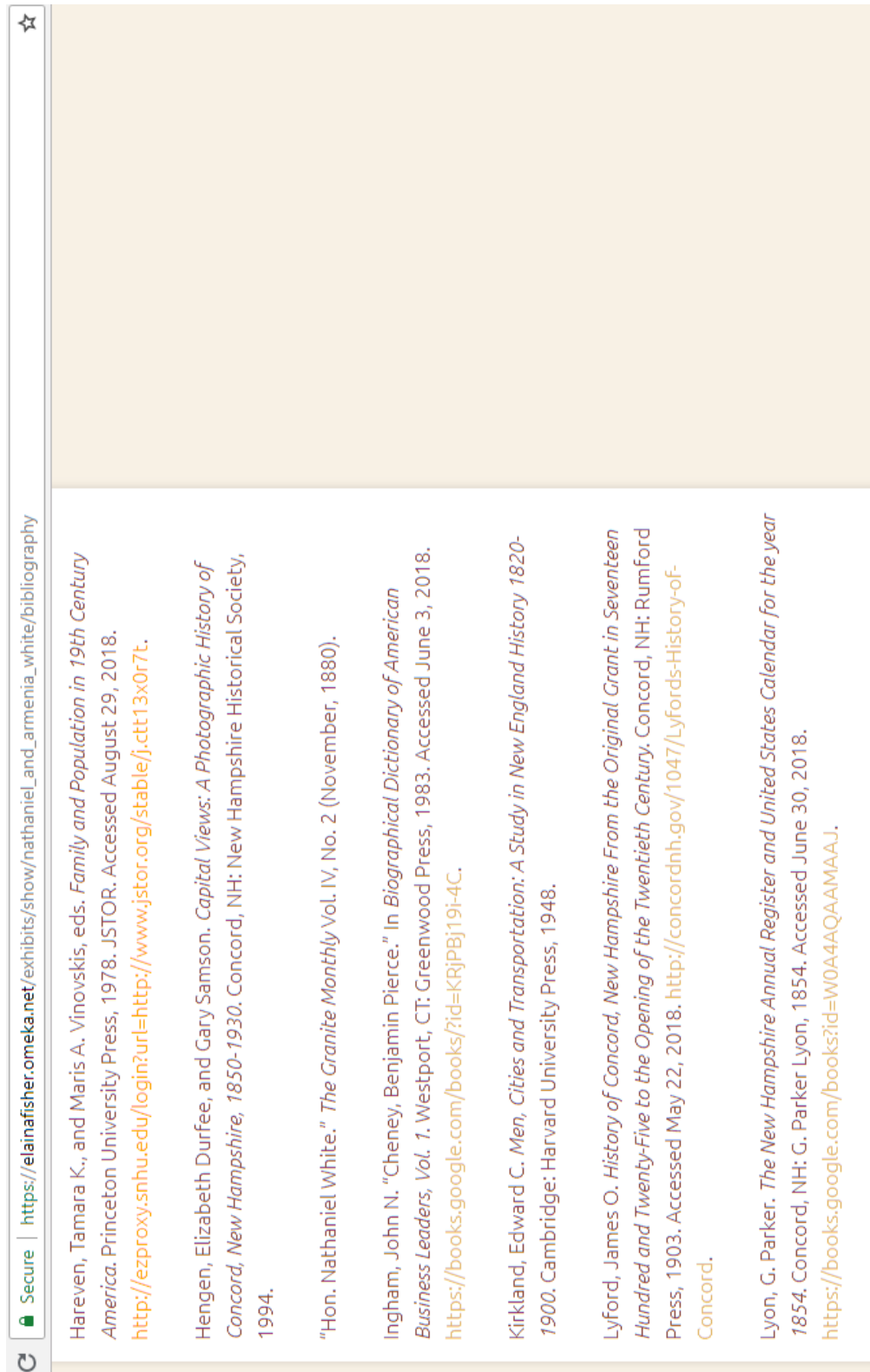



Figure 65: Online exhibit page featuring the bibliography, continued

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Figure 66: Online exhibit page featuring the bibliography, continued

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← White Park Bibliography

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Figure 67: Online exhibit page featuring the bibliography, continued

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